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THE DESIGN OF
CHRISTIANITY,
WITH OTHER
BOOKS, EPISTLES,
AND
MANUSCRIPTS,
OF THAT
Ancient Faithful Servant
OF
CHRIST JESUS,
JOHN CROOK. *K*

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED
A SHORT ACCOUNT
OF HIS

L I F E

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

An eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures. Therefore thus saith the Lord, If thou return, then will I bring thee again, and thou shalt stand before me: and if thou take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth. Acts 18. 24. Jer. 15. 19.

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A SHORT
H I S T O R Y
OF THE
L I F E
OF
JOHN CROOK, &c.

I HAVE often been pressed in spirit, to write this following history of my life, that so the world, as well as my friends and acquaintance, might know the Lord's dealings with me from my tender years; both for the comforting of the saints, and the information and instruction of all into whose hands this account may come. But above all, that the God of my life might be feared and exalted in the hearts, and by the conversations (in holiness before him) of all the sons and daughters of men for ever.

I was born in the north country, of parents that were for religion of the common profession of the times in which they lived, with whom I was brought up, and instructed in their way, until I was about ten or eleven years of age, within which time, I had many exercises in my inward man,

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and often prayed in by-corners, as words sprang in my mind, and as I learned prayers without book; yet many strong combatings remained within me, which continued haunting of me many months; until one time, above all the rest, I was almost overcome to consent, the devil urging me thereunto by a mighty violent striving, to run down all my resistance and withstanding of him. But on a sudden, there arose up in me, a power and life that did oppose and gainsay the enemy, making my spirit say within me, with much boldness and courage, I will not serve thee, O Satan, but I will serve the Lord God of heaven and earth, whatsoever I suffer, or becometh of me therefore. Which, I do remember, my tongue also uttered pretty loud, with much vehemency and resolution, in full consent to what was spoken inwardly in my heart and spirit, in opposition and contradiction to the evil spirit that strongly tempted me to give up myself to wickedness. After this, I was affrighted when I came to consider of those opposite strivings in my spirit, what they should mean, having never heard any body speak of any such thing: but especially I was amazed, when I considered what that voice should be, which spake with such an authority in me, that it commanded my tongue to speak so boldly in compliance with it, and against the other, which had almost forced me to consent unto its evil motions and suggestions; yet by the ease and relief I found in my inward parts, I concluded it was the Lord which helped me in so great a strait.

I remember after this, when I was tempted or troubled in my mind, I would get into some corner or secret place, and pray unto God; and when I had committed sin and evil, I was still troubled afterward, and then I would pray to God for his strength

strength against them: and when I was alone, I was sure to hear of all my doings, they would come fresh in my remembrance, and be so set before me, that I could not get them out of my sight, but endeavoured to get into some private place to pray and weep; and then would promise and covenant in secret with God, that if he would forgive these, and help me for the time to come, I would never do the like again: but for all this, evils prevailed against me, and I could not keep my promises with God. So that trouble came upon my spirit, and I often mourned and went heavily, not taking that delight in play and pastime which I saw other children took; which made me often conclude in my mind, that they were in a better condition than I, and that surely God was angry with me, which made him so correct me, that I could have no peace, whenas I saw other children merry and chearful, and not at all as I was. Yet sometimes I had ease, and was chearful, but it seldom held long, without some intermixture of trouble. I had also many openings in my mind, which did sometimes much amaze me; about heaven and hell, and wicked men and good men; and also I saw many of the priests prophane in those parts, giving up themselves to divers kinds of wickedness.

About ten or eleven years of age I went to London, and there went to several schools, until I was about seventeen years of age; in all which time, I was not without much trouble and exercises in my mind: notwithstanding I lived in a wicked family, and amongst those that scoffed at all strictness in religion; yet I would get into some by-corner, and pray and weep bitterly, from the sense of my own sins, and would often reprove my school-fellows and companions for their wickedness; I

often walking alone by myself in some secret place, when they would be at play and pastime. Thus I passed away my youthful days, in reading and praying oftentimes when trouble was upon me, which I was seldom free from whole weeks, more or less, either in the night or day time; but all this time I did not mind hearing of sermons, being little acquainted with any that frequented such exercises, until I went to be an apprentice, about the 17th year of my age.

About this time I was placed in a parish in London, where was a minister, who was in those days called a Puritan, where I came acquainted with those young people that frequented sermons and lectures, so often as we had any liberty from our occasions, being apprentices; yet trouble grew upon me more and more, as I grew in knowledge and understanding of the things of God; and still I applied myself to reading the bible, and other good books, and prayed often, insomuch, as those in the family where I was an apprentice, took much notice of it, and would stand in secret places to hear me, though I then knew it not.

But I remember when I was most fervent in my devotion, something in me would be still pulling me back, as it were, as if I would not wholly yet leave those evils I knew myself guilty of, but would gladly have them pardoned and forgiven, and yet would I continue in them: such a thing I found within myself, gainsaying my earnest cries and petitions, as if I would have had peace with God, and yet also have continued still in those things I prayed against; which at last made me conclude, I was but an hypocrite, and did not belong to the election of grace, but was to become some eminent spectacle of God's displeasure, and that that which gainsayed my earnest cries was the devil; and therefore

fore concluded I was possessed with the devil; and would often, as I had occasion, be enquiring of professors how it was with them, and how they understood the condition of those to be, that were possessed with unclean spirits in Christ's time; but all that I could get from any, could not remove this out of my mind, but that I was possessed with the devil; for I thought I often felt in myself something sensible, and manifestly opposing those good motions and desires that were in me, as if two had been striving in me for victory: and when I was so tired out with resistings and fightings in myself, I could get no relief or sensible ease, but by going to prayer, either secretly within myself, or down upon my knees in some secret place; and oftentimes when I was at prayer, I was so possessed with fear, that I looked behind me, lest the devil stood there ready to take me so soon as I rose up; and then I was troubled for giving way so far, as to look behind me; yet I durst not leave praying for all this. And that which troubled me often times, was, that those which heard me pray, admired my gift in prayer, and believed me to be a child of God, when I concluded nothing less of myself, than that I should deceive them, and cause God's name to be blasphemed by my miscarriage at last, which I concluded must needs be at one time or other; for I thought it impossible for me to continue in that condition long, but I should be made an example to all hypocrites.

Thus I continued professing, and praying, and hearing, and reading, and yet I could not perceive any amendment in myself; but the same youthful vanities drew away my mind when opportunities offered, as before; which was never much to outward gross prophaneness, but only to idle talk, and vain company, in mis-spending my time, and mind-

ing pride too much in my apparel, and such things, for all which I was condemned; as also for wearing long hair, and spending my money in vain, which I thought might have been better employed, if I had bought some good books, or been charitable to the poor: all that I did was condemned, and myself for doing of it also; yet I durst not leave off my duties, for then I thought the devil would prevail over me, to make me destroy myself; for I was afraid to see a knife if I was alone, or to have any in the room all night where I lay. And thus I continued, running to lectures when I had any time allowed me by my master from my occasions, which I endeavoured to get, by doubling my diligence in the day time, and also from my sleep in the night time, that so I might the more easily gain opportunities of my master; all which I employed in private meetings and lectures, going after any eminent man I heard of, which by this time I had obtained the knowledge of, by much acquaintance with constant hearers of sermons, and frequenters of private fasts and meetings.

I have often been in congregations, hearing sermons, when I have had much ado to forbear crying out in the midst of the assembly (I am damned, I am damned) but did not, though I went often away full of horror and misery in my mind. The ministers then commonly preaching by marks and signs, how a man might know himself to be a child of God, if he were so; and how it would be with him if he were not so; which made me sometime to conclude, I had saving grace, and by and by to conclude, I was but an hypocrite: and thus I was tossed up and down, from hope to despair; and from a sign of grace in me one while, and then presently to a sign of an hypocrite and reprobate again;

again; so that I could not tell what to do with myself, or whether it were best to go to church, or stay at home; for I could get no rest, or lasting peace, by all my hearing and running up and down: and yet I had no freedom in myself, to go to any of those ministers in private, to acquaint them with my condition; partly, because I thought they could not help me; and partly out of fear, lest they should discourage me, and tell me I was an hypocrite, and then Satan should prevail to force me to destroy myself; for I was afraid of any thing that might confirm my own thoughts of my miserable state, which I believed to be bad enough, but was exceeding afraid to have my thoughts seconded by the sentence and judgment of any other: so that I remember not that ever I went to any ministers to acquaint them with my condition, but bore it secretly in my own bosom, few knowing how it was with me. Then I resolved one first day afternoon (called then the Lord's day) being full of trouble, when I was an apprentice, to go that time which way I should be moved or inclined in my spirit, whether it was up street, or down street, east or west, north or south, without any predetermination or forecast, or so much as forethinking, either of any man or place to go to, or hear that day, but only (as the staff should fall, as it were, or) as I should be led; accordingly I did come down stairs, and went, as I was led by something within me, which I believed in and followed, until it brought me into a parish church, so called, where I went in and sat down, and within a small season of time, a young man went up into the pulpit, and preached out of this text, Isa. l. 10. "He that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God." Upon which text he had preached before, and was

at that time to pick out, or discover, who that man was that feared the Lord, and yet walked in darkness; the which he performed, as if he had known my condition and aimed at, and spake to me in particular; which did much relieve me, and at that time much comfort me, being so providentially brought thither, where I never was before, neither heard of any such man (that I remember) I went away much gladdened, and continued so for some time; but trouble came upon me again afterwards, through some negligence and coldness, which gendered to distrust and unbelief; so that the old enemy, the tempter, got in again, and tore me worse than before in my mind; so that I questioned all that ever I had at any time given me to refresh me, as being but a delusion, and no truth in it; for I was a castaway, and all these things were but to leave me without excuse. Then I began to be full of horror, so that my sleep was much taken from me, and anguish and intolerable tribulation dwelt in my flesh; so that when I heard any of the meanest poor people cry any thing about London streets, I even wished and desired that I were in their condition; for I thought every man or woman to be in a better condition than myself; nay, I thought myself the only miserable man in the world; had I been made the most contemptible creature in the whole creation, I had been happy in comparison of my most intolerable unexpressible misery; all which was heightened by Francis Spira's book, which came to my hand, but I would not read it over, I thought it so to resemble my present condition; for when I had read but a little, I cast it from me, and durst not look on it any more.

In this extreme misery I continued, keeping it
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to myself, mourning in secret, until one morning, as I was solitarily sitting, lamenting my present state; on a sudden, there sprang in me a voice, saying, Fear not, O thou tossed, as with a tempest, and not comforted, I will help thee; and although I have hid my face from thee for a moment, yet with everlasting lovingkindness will I visit thee, and thou shalt be mine; fear not, for I am pacified towards thee, and will never leave thee nor forsake thee, saith I the Lord, the mighty God.

Whereupon all was hushed and quieted within me, so that I wondered what was become of the many vexations, tormenting fears and thoughts that just before attended me; here was such a calm and stillness in my mind for a pretty time; so that it was brought to my mind, that there was silence in heaven for half an hour; and I was filled with peace and joy, like one overcome; and there shone such an inward light within me, that for the space of seven or eight days time, I walked as one taken from the earth; I was so taken up in my mind, as if I walked above the world, not taking notice (as it seemed to me) of any persons or things as I walked up and down London streets, I was so gathered up in the marvellous light of the Lord, and filled with a joyful dominion over all things in this world. In which time, I saw plainly, and to my great comfort and satisfaction, that whatever the Lord would communicate and make known of himself, and the mysteries of his kingdom, he would do it in a way of purity and holiness; for I saw then such a brightness in holiness, and such a beauty in an upright and pure righteous conversation, and close circumspect walking with God in an holy life, although I had before obeyed to the uttermost that I could, yet I could not get peace thereby, nor find
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and feel that acceptance and justification before God, as I did at this time when it sprang freely in me, that, as it were, all religion lay in it truly so, and all profession besides, or without it, were as nothing in comparison of this communion. For I remember, while I abode and walked in that light and glory which shone so clearly in my mind and spirit within me, there was not a wrong thought appearing or stirring in me, but it vanished presently, finding no entertainment; my whole mind and soul was so taken up with, and swallowed up of, that glorious light and satisfactory presence of the Lord thus manifested in me.

After this, I perceived an abatement of the glory, and I began to read and perform duties as I had done before (which for about eight days time, I could not perform so formally as I did use to do before (I was so filled with joy and peace) but with much more livingness and zeal, faith and confidence than before, which caused many of my acquaintance to admire my gift in prayer, and upon all occasions to put me upon that duty. I beginning about this time much to follow those ministers that came out of Holland, and some others that were more for the way of separation from the parish assemblies, disliking in my mind those mixed communions; much thirsting after, and longing for a pure communion with such as were most spiritual, and walked in the closest fellowship with God in holiness, and watchfulness one over another, for good and increase in a holy life, which much I longed for, since I had seen the beauty of it.

I did also walk with a company of young men, who met together so often as our occasions would permit, and prayed and conferred together about the things of God; and I remember, when several would be speaking out of the scriptures, by way of exposition,

exposition, &c. I had little to say from thence, not having much acquaintance with them, being brought up, mostly in my young days, under such tutors, and such families, as did not much regard the scriptures, accounting them Puritans and sectaries that addicted themselves that way: but I would be speaking forth my own experiences, delighting in, and loving those most who could speak from experience, my heart being most warmed and enlivened in those experimental-discourses and conferences; so that those who were most spiritual, delighted to be with me, and I with them; they would tell me, that I spake from experience; for I thought that I could speak to most conditions and things by experience, as if I had had a volume of all subjects within me, while most gathered their discourses from the scriptures without them.

In two or three years time after this, I began to gather scriptures into my mind and memory, what from hearing of others, and my own studies, which occasioned me to dwell more without, and less within; so that by degrees, the knowledge in my natural understanding and judgment began to outgrow and overtop the sense of my inward experiences; at last, having little besides the remembrance (now a great way off) of those things which once were lively and fresh, growing and sprouting up in me, as if it had always been spring time in my heart and mind: but afterwards my inward parts were like a winter, all retired out of sight, as into a hidden root; and many questionings about the way of worship, and ordinances of the New Testament began to arise in my mind, judging myself, that now the Lord had done so much for me, I could not be but chargeable with unthankfulness before the Lord for his mercies, if I did not now seek out the purest way of worship, that I might enjoy

enjoy all his ordinances in the purity of them: wherefore, after I had gone amongst several sorts of professors, of divers judgments, trying with whom my spirit could sit down and close with; at last, I met with some particular persons, with whom I joined in communion, in the way of independancy; and at times, we had many refreshings together, while we were kept watchful and tender, with our minds inwardly retired, and our words few and savoury; which frame of spirit we were preserved in, by communicating our experiences to each other; as, how our hearts had been kept towards the Lord all the week; with an account of most days passages between God and our souls, from the beginning of the week unto the end; which continued some years, until it grew formal; and then we began to consider our church state, whether we were in the right order of the gospel, according to the primitive patterns, and in the consultation of the proper administrator of baptism, and the right subject thereof, we began to be divided and shattered in our minds about it; from whence arose many questionings about divers things not at all questioned before, which gendered unto much uncertainty and instability. Afterwards, we began not only to be remiss in our meetings, but also confused in our preachings and services, when we were assembled; so that at last we did not meet at all, but grew by degrees into estrangedness one from another, and into carelessness, consulting principles of liberty, and ease to the flesh, and from thence, to encourage and justify our present remissness and coldness in religious performances. But I was not given up, or devoted to remissness and ease, as that I was wholly without checks and reproofs for my so doing; and oftentimes the inward distress and trouble of my spirit roused me up again

again to religious duties, as prayers, reading, &c. I found also by experience, that when I was overborn in my judgment and natural understanding, by principles and tenets, which were offered me in my shattered state, to draw my mind unto carelessness about all religion, and to a slighting of my former strictness (as well as others now) and as for sin and evil, those principles would have forced me into a belief, that my former apprehensions of the wickedness and danger thereof, were more from a sudden fright, together with a traditional belief of the thing, than from any grounded certainty from reason, or deliberate consideration thereof in true judgment. But against all this, and much more of like nature, which I was exercised with day and night, and often tempted to embrace, both by inward suggestions, and outward allurements, from those that sometimes had been as religious as myself, and no less acquainted with inward experiences of like kind with my own: yet from a sense and deep impression, which yet remained upon my spirit, both of great troubles (in being delivered from them all) and sweet consolation I had tasted; I say, the sensible remembrance of the former days (did stick upon me so, as to keep me from those principles of Ranterism and Atheism, which were rife and much stirring in those times, and through faith in what I had tasted, I was supported under many a bitter combat, and deep wave and billow) made me say and conclude in my heart and mind, that the righteous was more excellent than his neighbour; and that there was a far better state and condition to be known and enjoyed in this world, by walking with God in holiness and purity, than by all licentious and voluptuous living, or covetous gathering of riches together, to get a name in the earth. And this I knew from what
sweetness

sweetness I myself had once enjoyed therein. The result of all which, together with an inward cry, that was still continued underneath all reasonings and observations I could make, and lay deeper lodged in my inward parts, than all overly floating apprehensions and wanderings to get and obtain relief and satisfaction. I say, this continued cry and sound in my ears inwardly, called for watchfulness over my ways, and obedience unto what was made manifest to be the will of God in my conscience, as being more available to afford me rest and peace, than either all my notions, observations, beliefs, or sacrifices (outward) whatsoever; the meaning whereof, to know them distinctly, was as unknown to me, as the strugglings of the twins in Rebekah's womb; until it pleased the Lord to send one of his servants (called a Quaker) to join himself unto my condition, in his ministring, as Philip did unto the chariot of the Eunuch (who before understood not what he read) but afterwards, by Philip's expounding the scripture to him, believed what before he was ignorant of: so it was with me, through that servant and instrument of the most high God, opening my eyes, and speaking plainly, and not in parables, nor in dark sayings; whereby I came to see what it was that had so long cried in me, upon every occasion, of serious inward retiring in my own spirit: so that I could say of Christ, a greater than Solomon was here, and one that divided aright between the living and the dead, and manifested plainly to whom the living child belonged, and what was the true woman, or church, in God (the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ) and what was the harlot, or false church and synagogue of Satan; whatever she could say to justify herself, as the true mother-church.

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And indeed this kind of preaching by the fore-mentioned Quaker (so called) appeared unto me, at the first hearing thereof, like as if the old apostles were again risen from the dead, and began to preach again in the same power, life, and authority, in which they ministred when they gave forth, and first writ and published the gospel and New Testament of Jesus Christ.

I could truly say with Jonathan, after I had heard and tasted of the honey and sweet ministration of the blessed gospel, that my eyes were opened, and strength renewed from the same power again, by which it was preached at first, as free from the dregs and lees of man's wit and inventions, by which they had darkened counsel by words without knowledge: I say the truth, and lie not; after I had heard and tasted of that honey of Canaan, that flowed freely, without the forced inventions of man's brain, my eyes were opened, and my strength was renewed, and victory I obtained (through that grace of the gospel) over those lusts and corrupt desires which rose against those little stirrings and movings after the living God, which I had felt working at times in my heart, even from my youth, until the time of my being born again of incorruptible seed, and received the earnest of the inheritance and seal of the covenant, &c.

When the glad tidings of the gospel came thus to be founded in my ears, and reaching my heart and conscience, they did not make void my former experiences of the love and mercy of God to my poor soul, nor in the least beget my mind into a contempt of his sweet refreshings in my wearied pilgrimage, all along as streams of that brook which Israel drank of by the way in their travels; but on the contrary, brought all my former revivings that he gave me in my sore bondage fresh to my remembrance,

membrance, and set in order before me my manifold rebellions against his wooings, also my ill requitings of him for his tender dealings, often visits and long-suffering towards me; all which challenged a subjection from me, as most due unto this tender dealing God and Father towards me, and made me cry out, What was God so near me in a place I was not aware of! that I found my heart to be broken and overcome with his love and mercy to me.

And the more was my heart tendered before him, in that all things were brought to my remembrance, as one that not only told me all that ever I had done against him, but also all that ever he had done for me; and this rendered the truth more lovely and acceptable in my heart, that it should bring old things into new remembrance, and restore my old acquaintance with my long-provoked God again: thus it was with me in spirit, as with Nathaniel, who confessed to Christ, so soon as Christ told him, he saw him under the fig-tree; so I could not withhold my soul's subjection unto the truth, when it so thoroughly searched me, and plainly told me where I now was, and the several times that God had seen and visited my poor soul: and Christ's promise hath as really been fulfilled in me, as ever he spake it to Nathaniel; for since that day of visiting me again, I have seen greater things than ever I saw before, although I was sweetly comforted for a time, as I have expressed, yet not with that distinct plain understanding as after.

My condition before truth conquered me fully, and manifested itself distinctly, so as to make me lay down all my weapons and crowns, and give up myself to be on its side wholly, was like unto Hagar, who had her bag and bottle given to her by Abraham, when she went into the wilderness
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(for her son's lightness in mocking Isaac) which bag and bottle being spent, her condition with her son, was most miserable, in that she knew not well to recruit her again; neither could see it, though it was not far from her, until her necessity pierced God's ears, and then he soon opened her eyes, and she saw Lahai-roi (*i. e.*) the well of him that liveth and seeth me. So it was with me, when my bread and water of relief, which God often gave me to maintain me in the wilderness, was spent, and I likely to perish, I could not see any well, or way of supply, until the Lord sent the angel of his presence to open my eyes, and then I saw my Lahai-roi, which was there before, but I could not see it, until he had opened mine eyes.

And thus, for want of an understanding, did I, with many more, pine away many of our days, like Hagar, in the wilderness, as a punishment of our lightness, joining with it in ourselves, to slight weaned Isaac (the weighty seed in our own hearts) which is the heir of all spiritual blessings, and with it God establisheth his covenant for ever.

Here followeth a Relation of the working of Truth in my Heart since I was called a Quaker, until near the Time of my Departure.

I WAS convinced of the truth towards the end of the year 1654, (as I remember) through the servant of the Lord, before mentioned, called William Dewsbury, not knowing of what judgment he was when I went to him (for if I had known he
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had been a Quaker, I think I should not have heard him, being afraid of strange opinions, lest I should be deceived, but) being providentially cast where he was declaring, I heard him; and his words, like spears, pierced and wounded my very heart; yet so, as they seemed unto me, as balm also, healing and comforting, as well as searching and piercing; and I remember the very words that took the deepest impression upon me at that present, speaking of several states and conditions of men and women: such words passed from him, as implied the miserable life of such, who notwithstanding their religious duties or performances, had not peace and quietness in their spirits; who through the want of an understanding, where to know and find a stay to their minds, to exercise them at all times, and in all places, were like children tossed to and fro, and frightened with every bug-bear and cunning craftiness of men, to promote their own opinions and ways; which I knew was my own condition at that time, as well as the state of many more poor shattered people at that day, compassing ourselves about with the sparks of our own kindling, which did but procure us sorrow, when we came to lie down and be still, and commune with our own hearts, having nothing inwardly to feed and stay upon, but either formal duties which perished with the using, or disputable opinions about Christ, and doctrinal things, in the natural understanding and memory; but wanted a spiritual understanding of that which might then have been known of God within; which afterward I came to know and behold, as the appearance of the tried corner-stone laid in Zion, most elect and precious unto them that believed in him; whereby I understood certainly, that it is not an opinion, but Christ Jesus the power and arm of God, who

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is the Saviour, and that felt in the heart, and kept dwelling there by faith; which differs as much from all notions in the head and brain, as the living substance differeth from the picture or image of it. The reception of the word of life in my soul, was like unto the little book, which John in the Revelations was commanded to eat, which proved sweet in his mouth, but bitter in his belly: so was the truth unto me, most sweet and delightful unto my taste (even like unto Jonathan's honey) by which mine eyes were opened, and my strength renewed with great joy and clearness, which continued for some months after my first hearing, whereby my judgment was so enlarged and fortified against all batteries and assaults from any of the disputers of this world, that I doubted not, but at that time I could have maintained the principle of truth against all opposers. But all this while, there was little of the outward form of truth regarded by me, until I heard the same person declare the word of truth again: and then I began to see that all knowledge was nothing, without practice and conformity to what I knew: then began the truth, like the little book, to be bitter in my inward parts, because I did not yield obedience unto what I was convinced to be my duty; as to lay aside all superfluities in apparel, words and carriage, which was hard for me to do, being then in commission as justice of the peace; but by degrees, I was fired out of all consultations in this respect, by sore and sharp terrors in my conscience; for all my sins and evils, which I saw to be many and great, as well as secret and hidden, which, by the light in my own conscience, I came to see more and more through the exercise of my mind; for all my sins were but as fuel, which the wrath and indignation of the Lord took hold of.

I saw that now the axe was to be laid to the root of the tree, and that there was an evil nature to be consumed in me, which had born sway long, notwithstanding my profession of religion; and that my superfluity in apparel, words, and many other things, did but feed and keep alive that nature, and so prolong the fire to my own misery therein. And of this sort I saw plainly was speaking (you) to a single person, and putting off my hat after the customs and fashions of the world, &c. I reasoned, must all be left and put away, or that fleshly worldly-nature and part in me, could not wholly die, and I be perfectly delivered from it; because I saw that these things, together with using many words out of God's fear, were but as food, to nourish, and feed, and keep alive that nature and part in me.

But how strongly the reasoning part withstood me, in the parting with these and other things, none knows, but those that have been exercised in the like manner; neither can I express the multitude of ways and arguments which the devil used to keep me in those formalities and observances; and so much the more, because of my great acquaintance, through some publick employment, and other occasions. And yet the difficulty to part with my wisdom and knowledge (in which I had profited beyond many my equals) I found to be the greatest of tribulations that I passed through, before that I could enter into the kingdom of God, viz. to be, as it were, beheaded for the testimony of Jesus: for I found by certain experiences, that until man be truly crucified with Christ, he cannot bear a true testimony for Christ; for it is but a bearing witness to himself, which is not true; but after he is truly crucified with Christ, and risen with Christ, then if he bear witness of Christ, his witness is true: hence is understood
aright

aright that faithful saying, viz. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. After a long and sharp fight of afflictions, and deep exercise in my heart and conscience, I at last gave up to be a fool for Christ, and as one besides myself for the Lord; but it was not effected without deep agonies; for I thought I should have been distracted, because of God's terrors that were upon my soul; but when, by his grace, he had subjected the spirit of my mind unto himself, that I was made through its prevalency to yield, and be still, that so he might do with me what himself pleased, giving up to the death of the fleshly man, mind, and wisdom also; through which, as the slaying of the first-born in Egypt, it was then said unto me 'out of Egypt have I called my son,' which was before as one slain, by whom I am now made to live as one born of God, into his everlasting covenant for ever; which being thus known to be his own, having loved it, he loves it unto the end.

Thus I came to know him, in whom is no occasion of stumbling, to be him indeed, that silenceth the disputer and wise of this world, answering fully, and most satisfactorily, the deep inward cry and want that was in my soul, and was as a most sweet shower, that reached unto the root of the matter in me, while the former revivings were but as summer drops, ushering in a greater drought afterwards; or like a way-faring man, that carries but a night; and as I passed on my spiritual journey, the bringing fresh into my soul, the fulfilling of these, and many more sayings of scripture, like a brook by the way, most sweetly gladdened my soul, when the Lord made me drink of them, as a cup he put into my hand, and himself was the portion of.

I may not forget to relate in my journeying, how that after I came to Mount Sinai, I felt the burnings of that fire, burning up all my own righteousness like stubble and straw, as not being able to afford me any shelter or preservation from those flames. Then I thought to rely upon the knowledge I had of Christ, by reading the scriptures; as, that he was my surety, and God accepted him, as in my stead, his having satisfied divine justice, together with the sweet experiences that I formerly had of Christ, before I came into this way, or did believe in his light in my own conscience; and I said within myself, Shall I let go all these things for an uncertainty? Unto all which, and many more reasonings of the like nature, it was said in me, to my great relief at that time, Was it a bare remembrance of Christ, and his merits and suretyship, mustered up, or in thy own time applied, or own natural understanding, that did save thee, or helped thee in thy distress? Or, was it my free revealing of him, as my arm and power within thee, as really felt by thee, to comfort thee within; as sin and the devil was felt within, to torment thee? So that the seed of the woman, reaching to the weak estate man is found in, when Christ appears to save him (even when Satan, the old serpent, is most busy, lifting up his head to rule and torment the creature) this seed is also known to be the seed of God, according to the spirit, bruising the head of the serpent, and putting down all rule, that he may be a prince and a Saviour for ever.

Thus I came to the saving knowledge of Christ, which did confirm my former experience of his appearance in me, and to me, even when I was weak in my understanding, and had but fleshly apprehensions

prehensions of Christ: nevertheless, the true saving Christ of God, is indeed life, power, and virtue; whom to know as such, is the knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus: for the opinion or conception of Christ in the natural understanding, is too short; but while that within, which warreth against sin and evil, is minded and followed, it will rectify the understanding, to the true and right acknowledgment of him, who is the true God and eternal life, the very Saviour of all them that believe in him: many come to be dwarfs in experience, by giving way to the will (and not to the light in the conscience) to command and steer the understanding and judgment, refusing the light, as natural and insufficient; and yet at the same time, follow the will and understanding, which are both natural and insufficient; but understand it not, through the subtilty of the old serpent.

And thus I passed from Mount Sinai, to Mount Sion; from the ministration of condemnation, unto the ministration of the spirit; through which I could, and in heart did, give thanks to God, through Jesus Christ, freeing me from that condemnation which I lay under, notwithstanding all my duties and beliefs, as the sum and substance of all, being now my rule and guide, who was the guide of my youth in many things, although I knew it not then; and now is that spirit, which gives true liberty from every yoke of bondage, as being now known to be that ministration of the spirit, which doth war against the flesh, and contrary to it, whereby that soul that walks after the spirit, enjoys life abundantly; but if the spirit of this world prevail, then death and condemnation comes again; as it is written, so I found it to be true, he that is in the flesh cannot please God; and he that walks after the flesh shall die.

After this, I felt the spirit of truth to rule in me, and my spirit to be as really in union therewith, as before I was in union with the spirit of this world; which was from that time forward, as really a true rule to me to walk by, leading unto peace and rest, as before, when the old man ruled, in following of him I had trouble and sorrow. So that it was verified plainly in me, the stability of thy times are righteousness and peace; and also, that other scripture was fulfilled in me, viz. Neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision availeth any thing, but a new creature; and those only are accounted for the seed, the Israel of God, that do inherit true peace, who walk according to this rule.

When thus I felt the birth immortal raised up in my inward parts, like a most pleasant plant; I felt it often, put forth many sweet and heavenly breathings after God, with a frequent answer from God; so that it never sought his face in vain, or asked without a satisfactory return. I found also, as naturally praises and thanksgivings to arise and spring to God, from the holy root, as ever before I had known a wicked wrathful nature to cast up mire and dirt, and to send forth fear, horror, trouble, and distrust. Now my joy was full, and often a cry arose in me unto God, to keep me poor and needy in the daily cross; nothing in self, but out of all self willing and working, in the daily dependance upon the Lord in this pure birth, finding him to be a treasury and storehouse of all supplies; whereby, both alone, and in meetings, I felt him often to arise in great power and glory, to the constraining me to sound out (like a trumpet) living praises unto my God: and out of the mouth of this seed of eternal life, would words proceed within me as I sat in meetings with God's people, and at other times, which I was moved to utter
with

with my tongue often times in the cross to my own will, as seeming to my earthly wisdom to be void of wisdom, and most contemptible to my natural understanding, not knowing the end why I should keep such words: yet I was charged with disobedience, and deeply afflicted and troubled in my spirit, when I neglected to speak them forth; and sometimes some others have spoken the same words, while I was doubting in the reasoning about them; and then I was much exercised, that it should be taken from me, and given to another that was faithful,

How I came by my Ministry.

THE Lord having thus pleased to reveal his Son in me, shewing me in myself, the deceitful workings of the man of sin, in the mystery of iniquity, and his exaltation in the temple of God, being worshipped as God, above all that is called God, and rightly deserves that name, although little known, or taken notice of by the creature, because of the exaltation and rule of another thing which appeared as God, but was not; all which I saw in the light of the Lord; and not only so, but felt by experience, how God raised up the younger, and made the elder (in possession in me) to serve the younger; which the Lord had now raised up, as the beggar from the dunghill, and to know him who is both Prince and Saviour, and minister also of the true tabernacle which God had pitched, and not man; which I did not know in myself, while the first tabernacle was standing, nei-
ther

ther the holiest of all, while the vail was over my heart, which vail I found to be done away in Christ, and the new and living way thereby set open into the holiest of all: of which way, the Lord made me a minister, and commanded me to publish what I had seen, felt, and handled (and passed through) of the word and work of God; the which, I gave up to do, being thereby fired out of all my reasonings and consultations, lest that my own wisdom would either get up again, and so I should lose my own condition, and be judged as forward in my own will, by those I went to minister amongst; or I should go and appoint meetings, and gather people together, and should sit as a fool amongst them, having nothing to say unto them; with many other reasonings, too numerous to mention particularly. But being followed with daily stirrings and motions of life, and a command to go to such a place by name, signified to me, by God's spirit in my inward parts; which I obeying, I found a blessed effect; and many were at that time converted, which to this day abide in the truth, and others died in the faith: and the circuit and compass of counties, was shewed me by the Spirit of the Lord, where mostly I should labour in the work of the Lord; though not restrained from travelling elsewhere, when required thereunto by the motion of the same Spirit: so that I could not contain myself, but words would proceed from me in meetings where I was ordered among God's people, both at my own habitation, and elsewhere; and many places were opened unto me, where I was to go; and having smarted so deeply by God's judgment upon my soul, for disobedience in this kind, I gave up to God; and I found him always to be larger in his goodness than I could expect, and more abundant in pouring out of his Holy Spirit,

Spirit, than my faith could reach, even to the breaking of my heart many a time before him in secret, when no eye hath seen. To omit all the hardships and losses, as to my family, and all outward concerns, through which, I was obliged by a close pursuit of God's anger and displeasure if I disobeyed, as well as by the sweet continuance of the melting and heart-breaking sense of God's tender mercy to my soul, in bearing so long with me, and at last doing so much for me; as not only to free me from all my foes, but also from my fears of death, which all my lifetime I had been subject to at times; until I felt Christ come to deliver me, praises to God for ever. But also, I was constrained to obey the Lord, in going up and down, as he sent me, about his message; taking no thought what I should say, but cried to him often in my spirit, Keep me poor and needy, believing in thee, and then I shall speak from thee, and for thee; yea, from the engraven sense of God's mercy upon my soul, that he sent of his servants from far to seek me, and to preach the everlasting gospel unto my poor lost soul; and why shall I refuse to go to seek others, whose souls are lost, as mine once was; and shall I not love my neighbour as myself? And I knowing God's terrors, shall I refuse to persuade men in Christ's stead, in obedience to his motions in my soul, to be reconciled to God, knowing him to be a consuming fire? After this manner were the workings of my mind, and the thoughts of my heart; and when I gave up to go as before, when, and where the Lord directed me, and to come again when he called me, I never failed of his assistance. But when to my own sense, I was the weakest in all the meeting, and was as an empty vessel without one drop to relieve any, wondering what was become of all my knowledge, and now I should
sit

fit as one in poverty, but in a posture fitter to be ministred unto, than to minister to others; and yet as I had sometimes nothing to give, so I had no want as to my own condition, only for the sake of others that expected something from me, I was exercised in my mind; but by degrees learned to die unto the will of God, whether by silence, or speaking, to be content.

I began to minister about the year 1656, after I had been some months in Northampton prison, for being at a meeting with God's people, where I came to learn divinity through deep outward sufferings, as well as inward exercises, witnessing the opening of the sealed mysteries of God through the woes; for after the first and second woes were past, &c. new seals were opened into the mysteries of God.

And thus hath God made prisons to be as the schools for the true prophets, or nurseries for true divines: and then being preserved in much fear and awfulness of God, from the deep sense I had of his majesty and purity in my heart; I spoke of him as I felt his requirings thereunto, and his rewards were in my bosom as a most sweet and comforting cordial, that did lift up my spirit above all discomfortings, both from the enemies within, and without; although both oft times sorely beset me, even like bees on every side; yet God's blessed power and presence in me, and with me, furnished my heart and tongue with suitable matter to the conditions of the auditory, above all fear of any thing or person present. I might swell a volume with this subject, but this is spoken to the glory of the Almighty God, the comfort and encouragement of his ministers that abide in his counsel, and the abasing of all flesh, that the all-sufficiency of his Holy Spirit may be trusted in, and relied upon,

upon, as the only supplier of his ministers and people, that go forth in his name. Amen.

This Holy Spirit hath been to me both meat and drink, as the rock of old that followed the Israelites: yea, ten times, (as I remember) have I been in bonds, and not only incurred the sentence of premunire with my brethren at London, but also have been tried for my life in the country, and all for a good conscience to my God: but this Holy Spirit never left me, but in prisons many times hath made me to sing, and often at the bar fresh courage did bring; who by its virtue judges hath bound, and envious witnesses quite confounded that thought the innocent to destroy; but by this Holy Spirit all turned to my joy: my help is in it, and my comfort flows from it, and my daily request is to my God, that all his people may in all things be guided by it, that he for ever may be worshipped in it, and his blessed truth may be preached through it, that neither wit nor parts, outward learning nor gifts, persons nor forms, may ever be set or esteemed above it; but that we all, who have been baptized in it, may for ever be found drinking into it, while in the body; that when we all come to lay down the body, we may do it with joy, both to the praise of the riches of his grace, and the comfort of those that shall survive us in the same truth. Amen.

Note

Note.—Here followed an Account what doctrines he preached, and in belief of which (said he, I die) in full Assurance of a Resurrection to Eternal Life: but being almost entirely the same as is printed in the Collection of his Works, Page 360 to 379, the Reader is referred thereto.

And he goes on further, viz. That God only is to be worshipped, and not any image or likeness, either of God the Father, or of his Son Jesus Christ, or of the Holy Spirit; proceeding from the Father and the Son; nor the Virgin Mary, nor any image or likeness of the Virgin Mary; or any other saint departed, or yet alive, ought to be worshipped or prayed unto, &c.

‘ I always believed and taught, that neither the
 ‘ Pope, nor his Papists, or any other man or men,
 ‘ have power to pardon sins, past, present, or to
 ‘ come, or to give indulgences for sin; or that
 ‘ their doctrine of purgatory, or prayers for the
 ‘ dead, were according to truth, but quite contrary
 ‘ to the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New
 ‘ Testament, and contrary to the doctrine of Christ
 ‘ and his apostles.

‘ And I do not, nor ever did believe, that the
 ‘ church of Rome, or the papal church, is the true
 ‘ church, out of which there is no salvation; or
 ‘ that the Pope, or see of Rome, hath any authority
 ‘ derived from Christ Jesus, or any of his apostles,
 ‘ to be head of the true Catholick church; or that
 ‘ he, or the see of Rome, jointly, or severally, have
 ‘ any jurisdiction or supremacy over the said Ca-
 ‘ tholick church in general, or myself in particu-
 ‘ lar; or that it belongs to the Pope, or authority
 ‘ of the church or see of Rome, to be sole judge
 ‘ touching matters of religion, or sense of holy
 ‘ scriptures; or to command the least tittle of
 ‘ doctrine

doctrine or discipline merely from his, or their
 own power and authority, without warrant or
 license from the Holy Scripture; he or they in
 their so comanding, is not only tyrannical, but
 Antichristian, and repugnant to the royal office
 of Christ: and such I believe to be his and their
 doctrines of transubstantiation and elevation, and
 worshipping of the host or wafer after consecra-
 tion, with the using of their cream and spittle,
 and their penances upon their confession to a
 priest; and all the rest of his and their inven-
 tions whatsoever; I ever did, and still do deny
 and abhor the same, as false and contrary to true
 Christian religion.

I believed and preached that the worship of
 God is spiritual (and not carnal) in all its parts
 and ordinances, and ought not to be imposed by
 any outward force, but performed by the inward
 leadings of God's Spirit; and he that thus wor-
 ships God in the Spirit, his faith carries him be-
 yond his performances, with righteous Abel, and
 preserves him, that he is not lost or drowned in the
 form, like Cain; neither falls he short of the glory
 of God, nor of his assurance of acceptance with
 him.

I believed and preached the truth of the Holy
 Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, be-
 ginning my declaration most times with scripture
 sentences, as moved by the Holy Spirit; not
 daring to open my mouth, until I was inwardly
 satisfied, and believed, that these were the words,
 given me of God, to speak to the people, where,
 by his providence, he ordered me to preach the
 everlasting gospel, according to the assistance of
 his Holy Spirit; which was sometimes longer,
 and sometimes shorter, as the Spirit of God en-
 abled me, and gave me utterance.

I never

• I never wanted assistance suitable to the
 • service God called me unto, as my will and
 • mind was subjected to the orderings of this
 • Spirit, freed from all forethinkings, or forecast-
 • ings how to begin, or what to say, or how to
 • go on when I was begun; but the more passive
 • I was, the greater enlargements I had, with the
 • sweetest inward contentment of soul, and yet in
 • deepest abhorrency of myself at the same time;
 • finding it always safest and best, both for my
 • own preservation, and blessed success and effect
 • upon the auditory; not daring to give way, or
 • yield to the least tickling applause, praise, or
 • commendation, either arising in, or from my-
 • self, or from any others: but still felt an inward
 • cry to my God, to keep me poor and humble;
 • and mostly when I was poorest in spirit at the
 • beginning of the meeting, as I thought none so
 • poor and empty as myself, then I was most assist-
 • ed, and the meeting most refreshed; and in my
 • spirit, at that time, I was commonly as poor and
 • empty when the meeting was ended, as I was be-
 • fore it began.

• I believed and taught, that there are those in
 • our days, that do speak and write from a mea-
 • sure of the same spirit which the prophets and
 • apostles had; yet neither believed, nor taught,
 • that either myself, or any other, were to be
 • equalized unto them, either in our speaking, or
 • writings; either in the same degrees, discoveries,
 • or attainments: as it pleased God to make them
 • his instruments, in delivering those holy records
 • and oracles of his mind and will (contained in
 • the Holy Bible) for an universal service unto the
 • children of men; so far, as by the providence
 • of God, their writings came to be spread abroad
 • in the world.

• I believe

' I believe the Holy Scriptures to be the best
 ' outward rule in the world, yet cannot rightly and
 ' truly be understood but by the Holy Spirit that
 ' gave them forth; and that the Spirit of God can
 ' and may give the inward virtual knowledge of
 ' Christ unto salvation, where the Scriptures, out-
 ' wardly, never came to give the historical know-
 ' ledge of him; and in a sober sense what Chryso-
 ' stom faith, in *Matt. Homil. 1. Rectis & fidelibus*
 ' *Scripturæ non sunt necessariae, dicente apostolo, Lex*
 ' *justis non est posita;* (i. e.) to the godly and faithful,
 ' the Scriptures are not necessary; for so saith the
 ' apostle, There is no law provided for the just.
 ' And again, *Oportuerat quidem nos nihil indigere*
 ' *auxilio literarum, sed tam nudam in omnibus vitam*
 ' *exhibere, ut librorum vice, gratiâ Spiritus uteremur;*
 ' (i. e.) It behoveth us to have no need of the
 ' Scriptures, but in all things to shew ourselves so
 ' pure and clean, that instead of books, we might
 ' use the grace of the Holy Spirit.'

Nevertheless, I believe that the Holy Scriptures
 ought to be received upon the authority of the
 Spirit, evidencing the truth thereof unto the con-
 science, and not only upon the bare authority of
 any church or council whatsoever, Theodoret, *Hist.*
lib. 2. chap. 7. faith, ' The evangelical, aposto-
 ' lical, and prophetic oracles, do plainly instruct
 ' us by a touch or feeling of their majesty or divine
 ' power.'

And that neither any visible church, so called, or
 any outward councils, have authority or dominion
 over true believers faith towards God; because this
 doctrine, that they have authority over other men's
 faith, is not only contrary to Scripture, which testi-
 fies the apostles had no such authority or dominion,
 2 Cor. 1. 24. 1 Pet. 5. 3. but also being a dangerous
 influence.

influence upon our belief, to subject our faith to human resolutions.

I believe that without supernatural grace there is no salvation: for although that which is called good-nature, be as it were, an excellency of the first creation, and hath such a delightful union with itself in others, which is as like to the union of the measure of grace as may be; yet it being but of the first creation, cannot of itself, bring man or woman into the happiness and bliss that appertains to the new creation, or world to come; yet its worth is such, that a little grace easily commands it, while that which is commonly called ill nature, will hardly be ruled by a far greater measure.

That nature and grace are of different natures or kinds; for that good-nature seldom alters, except by some great outward trial or inward conflict; whereas supernatural grace often causes inward disturbances, by reason of its opposition to every thing of a contrary nature to itself: but it is greatly to be feared, that this good nature, I have been speaking of, is too much taken for, and believed to be, the supernatural grace; especially where this Divine Grace is not arisen in the heart, or come into dominion, to bear some rule in the understanding, and authority in the inward parts.

That the new creature or new creation, spoken of in the Scripture, partakes of the Divine Nature, which is Christ the image of God, also called Christ formed in us by the divine power, 2 Pet. i. 3, 4. compared with Gal. iv. 19, which is something substantially in the regenerate, whereby they cry and call in their hearts after God, and after all those things that are well pleasing in his sight, the life or spirit of his Son in them being plainly and frequently heard within them, leading and guiding this new man, as it were, by the rule of its own nature,

nature, according to Gal. vi. 16. which the truly regenerate experimentally find to be much more than mere qualities or habits, as some imagine; for by faith in its divine power, they do enter into that rest which remains for the people of God, spoken of, Heb. iv. 9. Such as are entered into this rest, have also ceased from their own works, as God did from his, when he rested from the creation on the seventh day, and sanctified it. So by following the guide and rule of the new creature, the regenerate labour against all that would hinder their entrance into this gospel-rest, as not to do their own works, nor to speak their own words, nor think their own thoughts on this Sabbath day, but still remember to keep it holy, lest they fall short by unbelief; for the Word of God within them, is quick and powerful to make it manifest, when any distrust or negligence is given way to; and that word pierces, to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, &c. and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. All things are manifest in his sight, and open and bare before his eyes with whom we have to do.

ment, according to Gal. vi. 16. which the only regenerate experimentally find to be much more than mere qualities or habits, as some imagine; for by faith in its divine power, they do enter into that rest which remains for the people of God, spoken of Heb. iv. 9. So as we entered into this rest, have also entered from their own works, as God did from his, when he rested from the creation on the seventh day, and sanctified it. So by following the guide and rule of the new creature, the regenerate labour against all that would hinder their entrance into this gospel-rest, as not to do their own works, nor to speak their own words, nor think their own thoughts on this subject; but still remember to keep it holy, lest they fall there by another; for the Word of God within them is quick and powerful to make it manifest, when any dissent or negligence is given way to, and that word pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and joints, &c. and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. All things are manifest in his sight, and open and bare before his eyes with whom we have to do.

EDWARD

EDWARD CHESTER'S

T E S T I M O N Y

CONCERNING

J O H N C R O O K.

AS to my dear and well beloved friend, and elder brother, J. Crook, deceased, whom I loved in the truth, and was intimately acquainted with, in his middle age and in the beginning of Truth's appearance in Bedfordshire, I had, though but young, the opportunity of often conversing with him. He was a man of some note in that county, being formerly justice of the peace in Bedfordshire; and God gave him a great measure of understanding in the administration of that part of the government, which he was intrusted with.

And after he had received the truth, the Lord, by his Spirit, made him an able minister of the gospel; by which he was made instrumental in turning many to God, and his truth. He had great openings, and was sound in doctrine, and might be called a skilful marksman in our Israel, hitting the mark.

A man greatly afflicted by infirmities in his body, and also exercises in his mind; in prison often, likewise loss of his outward estate,

greatly afflicted with the gout and cholick, insomuch that he would compare his state to Heman's being afflicted from his youth: and under the sorrow and grief that he had with some of his offspring, he would sometime, in a tender frame of spirit, comfort himself in the words of David; "Although my house be
 " not so with God, yet thou hast made with
 " me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all
 " things, and sure;" and that the Lord remembered the kindness of his youth. I am melted in the renewed sense of the unity I had with him in spirit; whose spirit, I believe, is now amongst the just ones made perfect.

He was frequent in prayer, praying for the welfare of Zion, and the prosperity of truth, the increase of Christ's kingdom, rule, and government, over the whole world: and, I do believe, he died in the faith, That truth shall prosper.

These few lines came into my heart to write, as a testimony or commemoration of my dear and well-beloved friend, who is recorded in my mind, from the sense that I had of him, as a minister of the everlasting gospel, and one well accepted of the Lord, and also of his people; and am persuaded he died a servant of the Lord. The Lord fit us all for his service, that we may all finish our course in the same!

EDWARD CHESTER.

The 29th of the 5th month, 1700.

RICHARD

RICHARD THOMAS'S
TESTIMONY
CONCERNING
JOHN CROOK.

A TESTIMONY lives upon my heart, to give for my ancient friend and brother John Crook, some time since deceased, viz. on the 26th day of the second month, 1699, and near the 82d year of his age, in the town of Hertford, where he had lived for several years latterly; and where he had a frequent conversation for forty years in meetings, by testimonies to the truth, to the convincing many, and to the refreshing and building up of others in the faith of Christ Jesus, in this town, and the adjacent parts of this county, of whom many are gone unto their graves, and but few of the ancient ones left after him. And forasmuch as my intimate and familiar acquaintance with him, hath been for forty years or more, in travels sometimes formerly, and latterly conversant with him in the time of his great affliction of body, by stone, gout, and cholick, I have often heard him say, That did he not feel and witness an inward power from the Lord to
c 4 support

support him, he could not subsist under his pains, they were so great, especially that of the stone, which continued on him to his end. And yet I do not remember, that I ever heard him utter an unfavourable word, or impatiently to cry out; yet after the extremity of the fits were over, he would express his inward joy and peace that he had from the Lord.

As to his ministry, it was very demonstrative and doctrinal, he had an excellent gift in opening the mystery of the holy scriptures, that it might be said of him, as it was of Apollos, Acts xviii. 24, 25. That he was an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures; and well instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord Jesus Christ, as these his works and writings do in part testify. And in former years, when he was at liberty (out of prison) he travelled much in the publishing of the everlasting gospel; many were convinced of his ministry in several of these adjacent counties; and many were seals of his ministry, and continued in the faith unto the end of their race; though some that have owned their conviction by him, are turned aside, and gone into the world again.

He came forth in early days, and may well be said to be one of the ancients in spiritual Israel, in our age, and had a share and part of the ministry, for the publishing of the blessed truth; and also a large share of sufferings

ferings for his faithful testimony to the spiritual appearance of Christ in this age; several times in imprisonments, as in Aylesbury, Huntingdon, London, and Ipswich: in all which he was a patient sufferer, until the Lord's time of his deliverance. He would sometimes say, with Heman, "I have been afflicted from my youth up:" and declared what conflicts of spirit he underwent heretofore many days and nights, for want of peace with the Lord: and in his youth he was, as many others of us have been, that are ancient now, seekers of the Lord in large professions; but it was on the barren mountains and hills, where we wanted life, as he would often say. But after he and we came to embrace the light of Christ Jesus, which shined into our dark hearts, we could say, from an inward sense, That which condemned sin in us, as it was obeyed, became our justification; which, through death, became life and peace, through Christ Jesus. In his latter days, some time before his death, he would say, That the furnace of afflictions was of good use, to purge away the dross and earthly part in us: and doubtless his and our experience, did, and can witness the same. He would many times say unto me, That many of the ancient ones were gone to their long homes, and we are making haste after them; they step away before me, and leave me behind; and I, that would go, cannot: well, it will be my turn soon (or quickly.) In which he seemed to rejoice.

This

This was upon my mind, and much more, that I could say of my dear and well-beloved friend; but not being willing to enlarge much, knowing right well, that if there were opportunity, many friends elsewhere in these parts of the nation, could, with me, give an ample testimony for him, who is gone to an everlasting rest, with the faithful, whose works follow them; which everlasting rest, that I, and all that sincerely follow Christ Jesus, in the regeneration and newness of life, continuing in well-doing unto the end, may attain unto, is the prayer of

Hertford, the ninth of
the ninth month,
1700.

RICHARD THOMAS.

GEORGE

GEORGE WHITEHEAD'S

A C C O U N T

Concerning our Ancient Deceased Friend
and Brother,

JOHN CROOK.

I HAVING had early conversation with him, after his loving and tender reception of the blessed truth, as it is in Christ Jesus, it being above forty years since we became first acquainted; I have this account to give of him, That after he sincerely received Truth's testimony of Christ Jesus, as he is the true light professed by us, he became truly zealous for the same, both in conversation and doctrine; and was in times of persecution exposed to great sufferings, by divers imprisonments, for his Christian testimony; being therein freely resigned, in the will of God, rather to suffer in person and estate, than to decline his testimony, injure his conscience, or break his inward peace with God, which he preferred before life, liberty, or external enjoyments. He had regard to the power of godliness, in life and doctrine, above outward dead forms; and to the enduring substance, above empty shadows; and to the spirit, above the letter: and yet truly and
highly

highly esteemed the holy Scriptures, with respect to the sacred doctrine thereof, being well read therein, and devoted for the faith and practice thereof, as the Lord gave him understanding. He was both eloquent, allegorical, and mysterious, many times, in his ministry; but did not thereby deny or invalidate the sacred history of things, as literally recorded in holy Scripture. He laboured to promote Christian religion in life and power, and the sincere practice of piety, above all empty and fruitless professions.

The mystery of Christ in Spirit, and as revealed and formed in true believers, and their sincere conformity to him, in spirit and conversation, he greatly esteemed; desiring professors of Christianity might come into the true sense and experience thereof, by a true, living, and feeling faith in Christ, and sincere obedience to him.

And as for helps and governments in the church of Christ, 1 Cor. xii. he did not think himself obliged to be so actually concerned in all the methods thereof among us, as many other faithful brethren are; yet retained his love and affection to them who are truly helpful therein, both faithful men and women: and therefore none ought to conceive, or excuse, opposition or disunion, from his passiveness therein, or tenderness toward them who might be otherwise minded in some lesser matters, or methods relating to good order and discipline: all are not gifted, nor spirited for government

government in the church of Christ, nor called thereunto; every man is required to minister as he hath received the gift. Nevertheless this good man was zealous against disorderly conversation, divisions, and backsliding.

His Christianity did shew itself in the spirit of meekness and humility, and in true love to his faithful friends and brethren, their labours of love, and gospel testimony; and greatly esteemed a sound convincing ministry, for the turning peoples minds from darkness to the light, and strengthening the weak in the faith and power of Christ.

For my own part, I can sincerely say, We did tenderly love each other, and were kindly affectioned one towards another, as Christian brethren; and I did in spirit sympathize with him, when he laboured under a long and sore affliction and weakness of body; in which the Lord endowed him with much patience, in submission to his blessed will: and though his affliction and pains were great, the Lord gave him intervals of ease, refreshment and comfort, from his presence, to support and bear up his spirit, until his desirable and long-awaited for change came.

London, the 21st of the
1st month, 1701.

G. WHITEHEAD.

SHORT A

DANIEL

DANIEL MONRO'S

T E S T I M O N Y

CONCERNING

JOHN CROOK.

HAVING been present at reading divers of John Crook's writings, a fresh remembrance came before me, of the saying of Caleb, Josh. xiv. 11. "As yet I am as strong this day, as I was in the day that Moses sent me: As my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in." And I am comforted in a sense of this faithful friend, that in his old age he was as strong for the spiritual war as ever.

DANIEL MONRO.

London, the 21st of the
11th month, 1791.

G. WHITEHEAD.

DANIEL

A SHORT

A (S H O R T

T E S T I M O N Y

C O N C E R N I N G

J O H N C R O O K.

Containing also a few words spoken by him,
a little before his Death.

IT was about the year 1662, I was first acquainted with this painful labourer in the gospel; and from the many comfortable opportunities I had in meetings where he was exercised in preaching the everlasting gospel, in much tenderneſs, I could not but dearly love him, as one of the instruments of God's glory, and of good to the ſouls of men, in this latter age.

His miniſtry was lively and demonſtrative, and plenteouſly opening the ſcriptures, and the myſteries of life and ſalvation; preaching powerfully the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, in his ſpiritual appearance, and work of ſanctification and regeneration; the death of the old man, and the raiſing of the new birth; to ſerve the Lord, the Redeemer thereof, in righteouſneſs and true holineſs.

About three weeks before his death, I was at Hertford to viſit him, and though he was
weak

weak in body, yet did he powerfully declare, after a prophetic manner, ' Truth must prosper, Truth shall prosper: but a trying time should first come, and afterwards the glory of the Lord should more and more appear.'

Among other his faithful brethren, he had a reverend esteem of the coming of Christ, and his sufferings, in the days of his flesh; and knew well how to distinguish his great work of redemption and salvation, as he died for all men, or was a sacrifice for sin: and also, as he was a sanctifier and redeemer out of sin: the fruit and benefit of the one, being not obtained without the other.

And were our adversaries duly sensible, what great things Christ both doth in us, as well as did for us, surely they would be humbled under his mighty hand, and leave off their slight esteem of his spiritual work in us, and not suppose the one to be in opposition to the other.

The apostle Peter saith, (a) " He bore our " sins in his own body on the tree, that we " being dead unto sin, should live unto righteousness." And how can we die unto sin, and live unto righteousness, but by his assistance inwardly manifest in his light, grace, and holy spirit?

(b) Our being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides for ever, doth

(a) 1 Pet. ii. 24.

(b) 1 Pet. i. 23.

not hinder his being (c) made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we may be made the righteousness of God in him.

(d) Our owning we are sanctified by the work of his Spirit in our inward parts, hinders not our having (e) remission of sins in his name.

He having left us an example, that we should follow his steps (f), bars him not at all from being our King, and Captain of salvation: though he is a condemner of sin in the flesh (g), yet he is also our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous (h).

Our owning him (i) a sacrifice for sin, hinders not at all his being our great High Priest (k).

Our acknowledging, he was tempted in all points, like as we are (l), doth not prevent his being able to succour us, when we are tempted.

Thus our preaching him (m), the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, doth not divest him of any of his blessed attributes, or offices, worthily bestowed upon him in holy Scripture; as the Seed of the woman (n), the Word (o), Emanuel (p) Interpreter, One among a thousand (q)

(c) 2 Cor. v. 21. (d) Rom. xv. 16. (e) Acts x. 43.
 (f) 1 Pet. ii. 21. (g) Rom. viii. 3. (h) 1 John ii. 1. (i) Heb.
 x. 12. (k) Heb. iv. 14. (l) Heb. iv. 15. (m) John i. 9.
 (n) Gen. iii. (o) Rev. xix. 13. (p) Matt. i. 23. (q) Job.
 xxxiii. 23.

(1)

Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace (*r*), Lamb of God (*s*), Jesus (*t*) Saviour (*u*), the very Christ (*x*), the Anointed (*y*) and many more: yea, he becomes all these to us, as we walk in his light, who was given for a light to lighten the Gentiles, that he might be God's salvation to the ends of the earth.

THEODORE ECCLESTONE.

(*r*) Isa. ix. 6. (*s*) John i. 29. (*t*) Matt. i. 21. (*u*) Matt. i. 21. (*x*) Acts ix. 22. (*y*) John i. 41. Isa. lxi 1.

INTRODUCTION.

INTRODUCTION.

VARIOUS and manifold have been the methods in religious affairs in England, within the memory of man; as may appear by these few short observations, or instances, amongst many others that might be shewn:

As by preaching, and proving their doctrine, out of the volumes of ancient fathers (as they call them) which was much used in the bishops times, &c.

Others preached by doctrine, and uses from their text, which they endeavoured to prove out of the Scriptures. Others preaching by marks and signs, shewing by them, how a man might know, whether he was a child of God or not, &c.

Which made way for independency of churches, living stones (as they thought by this preaching) being already prepared for their building; which begat that angry book, called, Edward's Gangrena, writ by a zealous Presbyterian, raking up all the miscarriages he could hear of the Independents, &c.

Others preached up water-baptism (as belonging only to those of riper years, that could give an account of their faith) as an initiating ordinance, thereby not only unchurching, but also unchristianizing those that opposed it: some of them preaching, That except men were baptized they could not be saved.

About this time Dr. Crisp, and some others, appeared preaching up free grace, and that God sees no sin in his people, &c. accounting themselves evangelical, and others, as legal preachers; these they called Antinomians, &c.

After these appeared a people they called Seekers, of these there was said to be two sorts, one sort they called Notionists, who were said to be above all ordinances: preaching up God and the Spirit to be beyond all, &c. The other sort called Seekers, denied that there was (visibly to be found) either true church or ministry in England (that they knew of) rightly constituted, for want of an administrator, qualified with gifts, and manifesting their sending by miracles: these (as was said) waiting for both church and ministry, to be restored, as was in the apostles time, &c.

After these, as I remember, appeared those they called Ranters, some of them having been strict professors of religion, these preached up one power to act and do all; of whom there were two sorts also; the one sort they called Civil Ranters, who kept themselves out of those gross debaucheries the others run into: these last affirmed, There was no sin but to them that thought so, &c.

Soon after appeared a people in the north, whom they called Quakers, from their trembling at the Word of the Lord, as it seems by the effects following: these bore testimony to the light of Christ Jesus within, in the conscience, to throw down all the former buildings; yet owning the former true inward experiences witnessed to be wrought in any by the Spirit of God, proclaiming the day of the Lord to be come, and coming, that should throw down their fenced cities and their high towers, and spoil all their pleasant pictures. Some of these
first

first preachers being sons of thunder, awakening many that were sleeping in security; but being thoroughly awakened by their testimony, they found their bed was too short, and their covering too narrow: to such it was as a midnight cry, unexpectedly coming upon them.

But some others of this people's first preachers, were as sons of consolation, trampling upon the mountains of opposition, to bring glad tidings to the hungering and thirsting souls, who readily received their testimony amongst all the former sorts of professors; which being taken notice of, some cried out, The everlasting gospel was preached again, &c.

These observing, that amidst so many opinions, guarded with so much knowledge, and outward learning, as both their leaders and many of themselves were armed withal, together with the countenance of the magistrates, which many of them had on their side, should so prevail, by their testimony to the light of Christ Jesus within; and that published by poor contemptible and illiterate instruments at the beginning, &c. depending only upon the sufficiency of God's Holy Spirit, without taking thought what they should speak, till God opened their mouths, according to the scriptures and doctrines therein recorded by the Holy Ghost, retaining still their belief of the birth, life, death, resurrection, &c. of Christ Jesus the Son of God, who died, and shed his precious blood for them, &c. witnessing salvation, not for the merit of good works, as works, though wrought in them by the Spirit of God; but for the sake of Christ Jesus, the author both of their faith and good works, that flowed therefrom, &c.

But

But finding, by experience, that generally all professors of religion in England continued in a belief of the death and sufferings of Christ, &c. it was required of these first preachers of the light of Christ within to continue their testimony to the same, witnessing in themselves; that by waiting in the light, they were instructed to distinguish between the living and the dead faith, and between the saving and historical knowledge; whereby they found, by good experience, that the misunderstanding between some professors of religion, and these first preachers of the light of Christ within, about the Man Christ, his death and sufferings, &c. did not so much arise about the things known and generally believed, as about the nature and kind of the faith and knowledge, whereby they were generally known and believed, &c.

But the tree being known by its fruit, and many beholding the brightness of the Quakers lives and conversations, at the beginning, believed their doctrine, according to Christ's promise, viz. He that doth my will, shall know my doctrine, &c. Wherefore many concluding their way, as people called it, was "The good old way," and ancient path, prophesied of in holy scripture, but had been long over-grown by the weeds of mens imaginations, traditions, and inventions, being a way too narrow for corrupt flesh and blood to walk in, &c.

But it being given to the faithful sincere professors of the truth amongst this people, not only to believe it to be the truth, but also the gift of suffering for the same, was given to them, whereby they were enabled to withstand all opposition from others without, as also the gain-sayings of the fleshly part within themselves, &c.

Whose

Whose innocent sufferings so tendered the hearts of many beholders, that many were prepared thereby, to receive their testimony. So mightily grew the truth, and prospered, the word of the Lord being precious in those days; when, for a time, there had been no open vision, but the vision of all was become dark, like a sealed book, &c.

But the gospel day, as it were, being now proclaimed; and the people, many of them, sensible of their great inward wants and necessities, such came flocking to meetings, where they met with spiritual supplies, answering their inward states and conditions, as if themselves had told them to the preacher; the kingdom of heaven, as it were, suffered violence, and the violent took it by force, as in the days of John the Baptist: those that were eye-witnesses from the beginning, may remember these things.

And how that when this people called Quakers, were but few in number, being low, contemptible, and poor in their own eyes, and had but few publick preachers came amongst them, the harvest being great, and the labourers few, they being, by their first preachers, commended and left to the Spirit, and Word of God, to be their teacher in their own particulars; unto which they did retire, in deep inward silence, waiting to hear what the Lord would speak in them; which he did, by his Spirit, according to his own good pleasure, to their souls refreshment: so that many times their hearts affected their eyes, to the amazement of the beholders; observing tears to trickle down their cheeks, and not one word, outwardly, spoken to, or amongst them.

In

In this pure silence they witnessed the outward testimonies of truth to be inwardly sealed to their hearts; whereby their spiritual love was so endeared to the truth, that the called, chosen, and faithful, loved not their lives unto the death for its sake; which caused them to be so watchful over their own hearts, as to keep them with all diligence, lest that fearful example of the church of Ephesus, should befall them, whose little abatement of the zeal of her first love, made way to the removal of her golden candlestick: and so to the bringing in of that fearful darkness, whereby her former so glorious and shining light might be extinguished: which ever since hath befallen most, if not all, the church-reformations we read of in history. Yet how few can endure this sound doctrine, of the danger of departing from their first love to God, and to his light and truth in their inward parts, &c. But on the contrary are apt to say, as lukewarm Laodicea did, They are rich, and full, wanting nothing, &c. not fearing to say of their first estate and condition, as some have said of the primitive Christians and churches, viz. 'They were but in their infancy,' &c. 'But now,' say some, 'that grain of mustard-seed is become a great tree, because of the multitudes that sit down under the profession of it,' &c. And in some respects, such speak truer than they are aware of; for most people having only a form of godliness, sit down under the bare form and profession of it, without the life and power of it.

But there are some others, more to be lamented than the former; for they have, in some measure, tasted of the good word of God, and have been partakers of the Holy Ghost, and of the powers of the world to come, beyond the former
(as

(as the Scripture speaks, and some of these also (not liking to retain God in their knowledge) have left their first estate, and first love to true godliness, as it is in Christ Jesus, and are become wanton in their behaviour, and vain in their imaginations, whereby darkness is come upon them: and yet say, with Babylonish confidence, ‘ They sit
 ‘ as a queen, reigning in the power as much as ever;
 ‘ and are no widows, their first love being still
 ‘ alive in them, and they shall see no sorrow,’ &c.

But when Zion remembers their state, then she mourns for the darkness that is come over some of her children; and prays for their return, as in the day of their espousals; then she knows she shall sing again, as in the days of her youth; and as when she came out of the land of darkness, and spiritual Egypt; then she shall sing that new song, which none can learn but the redeemed out of the earth, into the region of heavenly glory, &c.

It hath hitherto been the great unhappiness of all administrations, that the professors of and under the same, have caused the administration itself to be evil spoken of, by their not living up to the heighth of the administration they have been under; for which cause God forsook such persons, and left them desolate, by withdrawing that presence, and power, which at first appeared among them.

I shall conclude this epistle, with the apostle’s prayer for the Theſſalonians, 1 Theſſ. v. 23. “ And
 “ the very God of peace,” saith Paul, “ sanctify
 “ you wholly :” that is, all those which are in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, as it is at the beginning of the epistle, &c. “ And I pray
 “ God,” saith he, “ your whole spirit, and soul,
 “ and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Amen, Amen.

e

I find

I find upon the margin of the old Bible, printed about the year 1599, this note, viz. "When the mind thinketh nothing; when the soul coveteth nothing; and when the body affecteth nothing, contrary to the will of God;" this (saith the note) "is perfect sanctification."

JOHN CROOK,

CONTENTS.

C O N T E N T S.

	Page
Tithes no Property to, nor Lawful Maintenance for, a Powerful Gospel-Preaching Ministry, Written 1659	1
An Epistle of Love. to all that are in Present Sufferings, whether Inwardly or Outwardly 1660	26
To Friends in Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, and there- aways, 1660	50
To all that are in outward Bonds, for the Testimony of a good Conscience, in Obedience to Christ's Command, 1660	55
The Case of Swearing at all, discussed, 1660	62
Fourteen Reasons, drawn from the Law of God, the Law of England. to shew why divers true Christians, called Quakers, refuse to Swear at all, 1661	96
An Epistle for Unity, to prevent the Wiles of the Enemy, 1661	107
An Epistle to the Children of the Lord, 1661	127
Another Epistle to the Children of the Lord, 1661	132
An Apology for the Quakers, 1662	137
The Cry of the Innocent for Justice: Being a Relation of the Trial of John Crook, and others, at the General Sessions, held in the Old Bailey, London; beginning the 25th day of the 4th Month, called June, in the year 1662; before the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and Recorder of the same, Chief Justice For- ster, and divers other Judges and Justices of the Peace, so called	147
Glad-tidings Proclaimed to the Upright in Heart, who walk in the Light of Life: And Judgment pronounced against Babylon and her Merchants, whose Reward must be according to her Works, 1662	212
A true and faithful Testimony concerning John Samm, the Servant of the Lord, 1664	217
An Epistle of Peace and Good-will unto all the Children of the Lord, against this Suffering Time, 1664	225
To the King and both Houses of Parliament. 1664	231
Some Reasons why the People called Quakers do absent from the Publick Way of Worship, and cannot conform there	

thereunto, though they are exposed to great Sufferings because thereof. And also why they cannot Swear at all; and whether it be out of Obstinacy or Conscientiousness, resolved, Written 1665	239
Compassion to all the Sorrowful, Afflicted, Visited, Tempted, Suffering, Seed, whether inwardly or outwardly, in the City of London, or elsewhere, 1665	250
Truth's Progress; or, A short Relation of its first Appearance and Publication after the Apostacy, 1667	262
Twenty Cases of Conscience propounded to the Bishops, or others, who are called Fathers in God, for them to answer, 1667	292
An Epistle to all that tare Young in the Truth, and lately Convinced; who walk with, and assemble amongst the People of God, called Quakers; that they may escape the Wiles of Satan, and continue and walk in the Way of Righteousness, 1672	308
An Epistle to all that Profess the Light of Jesus Christ, within, to be their Guide, 1678	316
Sick-Bed Meditations, 1683	328
An Epistle to Young People professing the Truth, 1686	339
The Way to a lasting Peace, and true Reconciliation, 1697	348
To Friends of Sewel's Meeting, Bedfordshire, 1698	254
Truth's Principles; or, Those Things about Doctrine and Worship, which are most surely believed and received amongst the People of God, called Quakers, viz. Concerning the Man Christ, His Suffering, Death, Resurrection, Faith in his Blood, Imputation of his Righteousness, Sanctification, Justification, &c. 1663, re-printed 1698	357
An Epistle for Union and Edification of the Church of God in Christ Jesus, 1698	382
An Exhortation to stand fast in the Truth, &c. 1698	396
The Design of Christianity, 1698	402
An Epistle to Friends belonging to Hertford Meeting, 1698	411
Advice to his Children and Grand-children, 1698	413

T I T H E S

NO PROPERTY TO, NOR MAINTENANCE FOR
A POWERFUL GOSPEL-PREACHING MINISTRY.

THE P R E F A C E.

BUY the Truth, and sell it not, was the saying of the wisest of men, and is the voice and endeavour of all the children of wisdom, who know the price thereof to be beyond rubies, and the enjoyment thereof to be more precious than fine gold, and the purchasing thereof to be worth the selling of all, that it may be possessed; for in it is riches and honour, and by it comes the pearl of great price to be known, and who makes all truly rich, truly wise, and truly free, that come to the knowledge of it. But this is the mystery of it; it is not purchased without the selling of all, nor cannot be enjoyed but by those who are poor in spirit; and yet nothing more free gift than that, nor nothing more truly bought without money and without price than it: and the knowledge of this mystery is as free in its revealing, as this truth is in its appearing in and to the sons and daughters of men. Many have taken great pains to find it, but it hath been hid from the eyes of all living, and concealed from the wise and prudent; who have talked of the same thereof, but because of the dearness of the rate have been offended at it, and so have never come to the
A enjoyment

enjoyment of the thing itself, but have satisfied themselves with dead pictures and likenesses, framed in the chambers of their imagery; which idolatry is more dangerous than theirs who fall down to an image made of wood or stone. And when the beauty of Truth itself so appears, that it outshines their image, then they either oppose it with open opposition, or else will not receive it, because it appears with its visage marred, more than any of the likenesses that have yet shewed themselves; and exposeth the lovers of it to the world's scorns, to professors rage, and to great mens and rulers disdain and hatred. And because it appears to the staining of their glory and pride, they do now, not much unlike the senate of Rome of old, when Tiberius made relation to them of Christ and his miracles, who are said to reject them, for no other cause, but because they did not first approve the same. And farther, Tertullian, a man well experienced in the Roman laws, in his Apology for the Christians, chap. 5. saith (by interpretation) thus, " That it
 " was an ancient decree, that no god should be
 " consecrated by the Emperor, unless it were first
 " agreed unto by the Senate;" who also saith (on the behalf of the Christians) " That the Deity is weighed
 " amongst you after man's will and judgment;
 " unless that God please man, he is not made God;
 " so that by this decree, man must be gracious and favourable to God." Not much unlike to this constitution of mind have many grave senators appeared in these days, who could have willingly contributed to the putting down tithes, if the great men could bear it, and the priests be pleased to have it so, and the Parliament account it no disgrace to move against them, nor the lawyers be angry for impairing their trade: but such (it is to be feared) love the praise of men more than

than the praise of God; and while they please men, are not the servants of Christ. But where is these mens faith? And what is become of their experiences? Cannot he that hath delivered from the oppressive court of wards, and from the arbitrary star-chamber court, from the power of the bishops, and from others (who have said as Absalom once did, to palliate his design, Oh that all men would come to me, and I will do them justice, and take away oppressions!) deliver from tithes also? Yea verily, the Lord will deliver his people from this intolerable yoke of bondage; and if those in present power do not do it, deliverance shall come another way. For the Lord God is appearing in power and great glory, to deliver his oppressed seed, and to take away the abominations from the midst of the nations; and the longer any have continued, the more need there is to hasten the removing of them. And whereas there is a cry among people, that to take away tithes, is to destroy property, &c. therefore I have written this following discourse, that all sober-minded people may understand, how that both the law of God, the common, and statute law of this nation also, together with several precedents of the martyrs and others in the darkest times of Popery, witnessed against tithes, and all kind of compulsory maintenance (whatsoever) for preaching, always esteeming tithes to be but a meer alms; as by their own words at large may appear, which I have set down, as I find them recorded in the Book of Martyrs, for the satisfaction of those who desire to know the truth, and to be made free by it.

Titbes no Property to, nor Lawful Maintenance for, a Gospel, Powerful Preaching Ministry: With a Discovery of the Marks of the false Prophets and Ministers in all Ages, as they are found recorded in the Ecclesiastical History, since the Apostles days, to this very Time, agreeing with the Scriptures of Truth, both of the Old and New Testament.

PROPERTY is that which a man hath a just right to, and interest in, without injury to another; and is derived to him either by descent, purchase, or gift, and not by custom only: for that gives no man a title, or property, that had it not rightly confirmed upon him, as aforesaid. For although custom to places, and some things, are accounted as law; yet always with this limitation, such customs as are good and reasonable: for saith Coke,* “custom ought to be *raisonable, et ex certa causa rationabili usitata,*” &c. Neither doth the law of England create or make any man a title, or property, that had none before; but only conserves and maintains every man’s just property, and equal right. For the just laws of a nation, are their walls to their cities, and bars to their gates; and by them the land of every man is inclosed from other, though it lie in open field; and if a man do trespass therein, the writ shall be *quare clausum fregit*, as saith the law: and every law of the nation must be consonant to the law of God; and therefore (saith the law book) † “The laws of princes, the commandments of prelates, the statutes of commonalties, ne yet the ordinance of the church, is not righteous nor obligatory, except it be consonant to the law of God: and by such a law

* Cook, 6th Book of Reports.
cap. 4. p. 7, 8.

† Doctor and Student,

“ of man as is consonant to the law of God, it
 “ appeareth who hath right to lands and goods,
 “ and who not; for whatsoever a man hath by
 “ such laws of the nation, he hath righteously; and
 “ whatsoever a man hath against such laws, is un-
 “ righteously:” these be the very words of the law.
 And also by the statute law of this nation, it ap-
 pears, * “ That no man, of what estate, degree, or
 “ condition soever he be, hath power to dispense
 “ with God’s laws, as all the clergy of this realm,
 “ and most part of the universities of Christen-
 “ dom, and we also, do affirm and think:” these be
 the very words of the statute of 28 Hen. 8. & 7 ch.

Therefore seeing that every law of man must be
 consonant to the law of God, or else it is no law;
 and that every custom, that is accounted as a law,
 must be reasonable; and every law of man must be
 equal and just, according to the law of God (as
 the law itself saith) as before is mentioned:
 and no man can have a property, but by descent,
 purchase, or gift, (the law itself, not creating a
 property, but only conserving to every man his
 just right and interest, as abovesaid) and those laws
 for tithing, made in the time both of Hen. 8. and
 Edw. 6. (there being no law before made by par-
 liaments, only the statute of Rich. 2. 15. & 6. con-
 firmed by Hen. 4.) by this it appears, that tithes
 were but a free gift or alms; and therefore special
 care is taken, that a convenient portion of tithes
 be set out for a maintenance for the poor of the
 parish (as by that statute appears, though made in
 the midnight of Popery) not wholly forgetting the
 end for which they were given under the law, That
 there might be no beggar in Israel.

And were it not righteous and just, that those who
 have robbed the poor, of that which was their due

† Statute made by King, Lords, and Commons

by law, should themselves be made poor, and have that taken from them, which they have so long robbed others of, contrary to law? I say, the statute made in Hen. 8. and Edw. the 6th's time, did not create a right, but only confirm what was then, in that night of Popery, presumed and supposed to be a right, upon grounds which now appear to be false, viz. As belonging to God, and holy church; and were then called, in the stat. of Hen. 8. spiritual gifts; and impropriate tithes, that were sold after the dissolution, are said now to be made temporal, and not before. And neither these, nor any other laws, ever gave any man a right, or property in or to tithes, but only through the blindness and superstition of those Popish times, supposed a right upon a spiritual ground, as aforesaid; but so gave power to Ecclesiastical courts to sue for them; which before they could not do, but only excommunicate for non-payment: but by those statutes they might sue in Ecclesiastical courts, and not elsewhere; as the statute of Edw. 6. saith; upon which statute they bring their action for treble damages; which statute itself restrains the trial of tithes to Ecclesiastical courts, but not elsewhere. And for judges to make laws, or to interpret the laws, contrary to the words of the law, is a presumption, not much unlike that which Israel of old, Deut. xvii. 12. in difficult cases, were to beware of, and not be hasty in, but to do according to the sentence of the law; from which they were not to decline either to the right hand, or the left, upon pain of death. For if the law, that is just, be declined, and left to man's will, is not the maxim of the law made good, *Misera servitus est, ubi jus est vagum, aut incognitum*; that is a miserable bondage, where the law is left to the will of the judge: and in this case, where the

the statute restrains it, what judge may go farther? And to say, where a penalty is appointed, and no way mentioned for the recovering of it, that then it shall be taken for granted, that the courts at Westminster are intended; is, in this case, to make the law intend against itself (for the law is called *approved reason*) and to suppose that the treble damages are recoverable at common law; when the principle itself, for the non-payment of which the treble damages are due, is not yet proved a debt, nor is recoverable but in the spiritual courts; is as much as if a man should say that I promised to pay him ten pounds upon the first of May last, and if it were not paid, I would give him thirty pounds, and he should be admitted to sue for the thirty pounds penalty for the non-payment of the ten pounds; and yet may not sue for the said ten pounds, to prove that promised, and not paid accordingly; or, to try the accessory, before the principal; when as, if no fact was committed, no man for being accessory could be punished. And therefore before tithes be proved in the Ecclesiastical courts, to be subtracted, or withheld, or not set out, no damages for not setting out can justly and legally be recovered. And for any man to take away my corn and hay, &c. without my consent, or recovered in manner aforesaid, differs nothing from him that pretends a debt, and without any farther proceedings, comes and takes away my goods by force, and against my will. But some do say, justices of the peace have power to make a judgment in the case: many do that by power which they cannot do by law; but justices are only authorized by an ordinance of parliament: and if the preamble of this ordinance may be called *clavis legis*, as preambles to laws are called, then their power is at an end, because they were but entrusted, by reason of the exigencies of war,

courts of justice being obstructed; and if the justices of peace, or their clerks, or kindred, were not some way gainers by it, they need not now act upon that ordinance: the reason of that temporary law being taken away, viz. obstructions of courts of justice, the law itself ceaseth; if this maxim in the law be true, viz. That the reason of the law is the law itself; and especially if Coke say true, viz. "That an ordinance bindeth not in succession." Besides, that matters of title should be determined in an alehouse, or private chamber, is a shame to a free state, and no honour to justices of peace, to intermeddle with that which indeed they have not legally to do withal; they acting only by an ordinance, and that ordinance never yet confirmed by act. What, are not all the courts at Westminster sufficient? Take heed, for to overdo, is to undo. But however, the justices ordinance hath no better bottom than a supposed right, as aforesaid; which is no right, but a common wrong; and they that act upon that ordinance now, are no friends to true freedom, to say no more.

And that tithes are an oppression, and unrighteous thing, many have borne their testimony, both martyrs and others, as may appear more at large hereafter; and for any to say, that another hath as good a property in, and right to, the tenth of my increase, as I have to nine parts, or as I have to the coat on my back, or to the nine parts of my land, is ignorance to be pitied, rather than to be disputed against. But as custom in sinning begets hardness, so do superstition and ignorance, by tradition, beget faith in a lie; which makes truth so hard to be received, by aged wise men after the flesh, because they have seen and read the records of their forefathers; and some, through their blindness, being settled on their lees, are resolved to go
no

no farther than their fathers went, nor to believe otherwise than the church believes; and others dare not see beyond their profit, nor believe farther than may stand with their gain, that being their godliness: court greatness having blinded their eyes, and made them to despise the oppression of the afflicted, and to be regardless of the consciences of the upright, their greatness having taken away their feeling. And many old men, like those in Nehemiah's days, who wept when they saw the foundation of the second temple laid, and considered of the former temple, how beautiful that had been; so do many now begin to bewail their loss, and cry out, What will become of their gospel, if tithes be taken away! And others say, What, will you destroy property, and take away men's rights? the taking away of tithes will quite destroy our ministers, and impair the lawyers trade, &c. And so the downfall of Babylon must beget the bewailing of many merchants, not only of those who have enriched themselves by the laws, but also those who have made merchandize of the souls of men; for this is as horrible a thing in our days, as it was of old, in the days of the prophet, viz. "For the priests to preach
 "for hire, and for the judges to judge for reward:" and may it not be said of such now, as Micah said then; "The best of them is as a brier, and the most
 "upright is sharper than a thorn hedge; the day of
 "thy watchmen and thy visitation cometh; now
 "shall be thy perplexity?" Mic. vii. 4.

But to return to the objection, That they have as good a right to the tenth part, as I have to nine, &c. To which it is said, By law they have no right, as before it is said; for the law only preserves my right, that another man may not take it from me; but gives right to no man, that had it not derived to him, either by descent, purchase, or gift, as afore-
 said.

said. Now if it cannot be made appear by him who challengeth property in tithes, that it came to him one of these ways aforesaid, then he hath no right to nor legal property in them. Now by descent, he cannot have them; for that cannot descend to another, which is not *in rerum natura*; as the increase and renewing of my land by my labour is not, and therefore cannot descend from another, who never was owner of it, nor never had it in his possession; as no man can be of my increase, procured by my labour: and if I plough not, no corn will grow; and if I mow not, no hay is made; and so it is in my power, whether any thing, how much, or nothing, the priest shall have. And again, if I, by my own act, do not set out my tithes, he hath no property, until by my voluntary act I give it him; for it cometh not by the land, nor doth he challenge the tenth of the rent, nor tenth acre, but the tenth of the increase, renewing, or growing in, and upon the premises, &c.

And whereas it is said, the law implies a property, in that it hath provided a punishment of treble damages for not setting it out, and what a parliament doth, is supposed to be done by the people, whom they represent, &c. to which I answer, That it is true, the law-makers supposed a due to God, and holy church; and upon this supposition and foundation, enacted a penalty upon him that did not set out his tithes. But some of our late judges have since adjudged, that tithes are not so due, viz. by God's law; as Chief Justice Rolls in the upper bench at Westminster. And if that supposed common right be generally seen, and be confessed to be a real common wrong, may not a man make use of his eye, to avoid the pit which he and others, in the time of their darkness, fell into; and if a man will wink when he may see, if he fall then into the pit, is he not guilty of his own death?

And

And for the statute made in Edw. the 6th's time, if the supposed right, upon which that law is built, be found to be oppression and wrong, and that God and holy church hath disclaimed their right to tithes under the gospel; and that by their writings upon record, that there being a change of the priesthood, there is made also a necessity of the change of the law: then what is that law worth, that is contrary to God; and that commandment, which is opposite to his?

Again, as before is proved, not only by the law of God, but also by the common and statute law of this nation, all laws made contrary, or not consonant to the law of God, are void of themselves: and that law, which is built upon a false rotten foundation, must needs fall; as that is, which supposeth tithes to be due by common right, or due to God and holy church under the gospel, which they are not, as before is proved; and then the reason of the law failing, the law itself falls; for saith Coke, *Lex non est in foliis verborum sed in radice rationis*: and if that which is said to be due by common right, prove to be a common wrong, and general grievance, then that other maxim of the law takes it away also, *Salus populi suprema lex*, the peoples weal is the chiefest law; and that it is the peoples intolerable burden, I need not prove.

And as no right nor property to tithes comes to any by descent, or reason of any just law, so neither can any property be derived to any by purchase or gift. For no man hath power, legally, to sell, or give, that which he hath no just interest in; neither may any man buy it (except in his own wrong) no more than a man may sell my goods, which he hath gotten wrongfully from me; nor no more than another hath any just power to dispose, or give away, that which is none of his, or he hath
no

no right or property in himself to dispose of; the law counts such a gift, or sale, to be theft and robbery.

And to say that it is an incumbrance which every man knows of when he buys his land, and therefore no wrong, is a mere device to deceive the simple withal: for a man buys his land free from all incumbrances whatsoever, with this general warranty and covenant, not only free from all statutes, mortgages, judgments, &c. but also with these general words, 'free from all other incumbrances whatsoever;' which words are a deceit, if so be a man knows a tenth part to be due to another, and yet he sells the whole, as aforesaid. And if it be a real incumbrance in the law upon the estate, or that another hath a right or property in that which I bought absolute and free, as aforesaid, will not an action in that case lie against him that sold it free, and covenanted to make it good, as aforesaid? If so, what work would this make in the nation for the lawyers? But in truth, is it not intended by the law, that every man should have and enjoy his land free as he bought it? And then he may give freely what he will, and to whom he will; and then (*volenti non fit injuria*) to him that is willing, it is no wrong. And thus the famous reformers and martyrs looked upon them, as John Wickliff, in the 17th Article, charged against him in these words, viz.

'That tenths are pure alms, and that the parishioners may, for offence of their curates, detain and keep them back, and bestow them upon others at their own wills and pleasures.'

William Swindersby saith, in these words, 'That no priest owes to sell by bargain, and covenant his ghostly travel, ne his prayers, ne God's word, &c. nor any worldly men's reward: to ask or take for these,

these, or for any of these, or for any ghostly thing,
he errs, and doth Simony*.

Walter Brute, in these words, 'That tithes are
mere alms; and in case that curates shall be ill,
they may be lawfully bestowed upon others by the
temporal owners,' &c.

Walter Brute farther saith, 'That a priest receiv-
ing by bargain any thing of yearly annuity, is in
so doing a schismatick and excommunicate,' &c.

William Thorp saith, as followeth, in these words,
viz. 'After Christ's ascension, and when the apo-
stles had received the Holy Ghost, they travailed
with their hands to get their livelihood, when that
they might thus do for busie preaching; there-
fore by the example of himself, Saint Paul teach-
eth all the priests of Christ to travail with their
hands, when for busie teaching of the people, they
might thus do, whose priesthood God accepteth
now, or will accept, or did in the apostles time,
and after their decease, and will to the world's
end. But as Cisterciensis, in the year of our
Lord Jesus Christ, 1211, one † Pope Gregory
the tenth ordained new tithes first to be given to
priests, now in the new law: but Saint Paul in
his time, whose trace or example all priests of God
inforce them to follow, seeing the covetousness
that was among people, desiring to destroy that
foul sin by the grace of God, and true virtuous
living, and example of himself, wrought and taught
all priests to follow him, as he followed Christ,
willingly and patiently, in high poverty. Where-
fore Paul saith thus, The Lord hath ordained, that
they which preach the gospel, shall live of the

* 'Simonia a Simone Magos: quum quis Ecclesiasticos functiones quæ mera
Dei dona sunt nundinatur.' Whosoever purchaseth offices with money,
which are God's free gifts, commits Simony, and is like Simon Magus.

† Pope Gregory the tenth first appointed tithes under the gospel about
the year 1211.

' gospel; but we, saith Paul, that covet and busie
 ' us to be faithful followers of Christ, use not this
 ' power; for lo, as Paul witnesseth, when he was
 ' full poor and needy, preaching among the people,
 ' he was not chargeous unto them, but with his
 ' hands he travailed, not only to get his own living,
 ' but also the living of other poor and needy crea-
 ' tures. And since the people were never so cove-
 ' tous, nor so avaricious, I guess, as they are now,
 ' it were good counsel, if all priests took good
 ' heed to this heavenly learning of Paul, following
 ' him here in wilful poverty; nothing charging the
 ' people for their bodily livelihood. But because
 ' that many priests do contrary to Paul, in the
 ' aforesaid doctrine, Paul biddeth the people to take
 ' heed of those priests, that follow not him, as he
 ' had given them example; as if, saith he, Paul
 ' would say thus to the people, Accept ye no other
 ' priests, than they that live after the form that I
 ' have taught you. For certain, in whatsoever dig-
 ' nity or order that any priest is in, if he conform
 ' him not to follow Christ and his Apostles in wilful
 ' poverty, and in other heavenly virtues, and speci-
 ' ally in true preaching of God's word, though such
 ' a one be named a priest, yet he is no more but a
 ' priest in name; for the work of a very priest in
 ' such a one wanteth. This sentence approveth Au-
 ' gustine, Gregory, Chrysostom, and Lincolne,
 ' plainly.

' And he saith farther, in these words, ' It is no
 ' wonder, though people grudge to give the priests
 ' the livelihood that they ask; mickle people know
 ' now how priests should live, and how that they
 ' live contrary to Christ, and to his Apostles; and
 ' therefore the people are full heavy to pay, as they
 ' do, their temporal goods to parsons, and other
 ' vicars and priests, which should be faithful dispen-
 ' sators

' factors of the parish goods, and taking to themselves
 ' no more, but a scarce living, of tithes nor of of-
 ' ferings, by the ordinance of the common law :
 ' for whatsoever priests take of the people (be it
 ' tithes or offering, or any other duty or service)
 ' the priests ought to have thereof no more but a
 ' bare living, and to depart the residue to the poor
 ' men and women, especially of the parish of whom
 ' they take this temporal living. But the most deal
 ' of priests now wasteth their parish goods, and
 ' spendeth them at their own will, after the world,
 ' in their vain lusts; so that in few places poor men
 ' have duly, as they should have, their own suste-
 ' nance, neither of tithes, nor of offerings, nor of
 ' other large wages and foundations the priests take
 ' of the people, in divers manners, above that they
 ' need, for needful sustenance of meat and clothing;
 ' but the poor needy people are left and forsaken of
 ' priests, to be sustained of the parishioners, as if the
 ' priests took nothing of the parishioners to help the
 ' people with. And thus, Sir, (saith Thorp to the
 ' Bishop) into over great charges of the parishioners
 ' they pay their temporal goods thrice, where once
 ' might suffice, if priests were true dispensators.
 ' The parishioners that pay their temporal goods
 ' (be they tithes or offerings) to priests that do not
 ' their office among them justly, are partners of eve-
 ' ry sin of those priests, because that they sustain
 ' those priests folly in their sin with their tempo-
 ' ral goods. If these things be well considered, what
 ' wonder is it then, if the parishioners grudge
 ' against these dispensators ?'

And he farther saith, that Paul saith, ' That tithes
 ' were given in old law to Levites, and to priests
 ' that came of the lineage of Levi; but our priests
 ' came not of the lineage of Levi, but of the lineage
 ' of Judah, to which Judah no tithes were promised
 ' to be given: and therefore Paul saith, Since the
 ' priest-

' priesthood is changed from the generation of Levi
 ' to the generation of Judah, it is necessary that
 ' changing also be made of the law; so that priests
 ' live now without tithes, and other duties that
 ' they claim, following Christ and his Apostles in
 ' wilful poverty, as they have given them example;
 ' for since Christ lived all the time of his preaching
 ' by pure alms of the people, and by example of
 ' him his apostles lived in the same wise, or else by
 ' the travail of their hands, as it is said above. Every
 ' priest, whose priesthood Christ approveth, know-
 ' eth well, and confesseth in word and in work,
 ' that a disciple ought not to be above his master;
 ' but it sufficeth, for a disciple, to be simple and pure,
 ' patient and meek, and by his example, specially of
 ' his Master Christ, every priest should rule him in
 ' all his living; and so after his cunning and power
 ' a priest should busie him, to reform and rule
 ' whomsoever he might charitably.'

And he further saith thus, ' There is a doctor
 ' (I think it is St. Hierom) that saith thus, The
 ' priests that challenge now, in the new law, tithes,
 ' say in effect, that Christ is not become man, nor
 ' that he hath yet suffered death for man's love.
 ' Wherefore this doctor saith this sentence, Since
 ' tithes were the hires and wages limited to Le-
 ' vites, and to priests of the old law, for bearing
 ' about of the tabernacle, and for slaying and fleaing
 ' of beasts, burning of sacrifices, and for keeping
 ' of the temple, &c. and other things that pertained
 ' to their office; those priests, that will challenge or
 ' take tithes, deny that Christ is come in the flesh,
 ' and do the priests office in the old law, for whom
 ' tithes were granted: for else, this doctor saith,
 ' priests take tithes now wrongfully; and saith far-
 ' ther, that tithes and other duties, which priests
 ' challenge now, are wrongfully called, " Freedom
 ' " of

“ of holy church;” since neither Christ nor his
 ‘ apostles challenged nor took such duties: therefore
 ‘ those takings of priests now, are not justly called
 ‘ the “ freedom of holy church;” but all such giv-
 ‘ ing and taking ought to be called and holden the
 ‘ slanderous covetousness of men of holy church.”

And farther saith in these words, viz. ‘ Since by
 ‘ the viciousness of priests, both Lords and Com-
 ‘ mons are most sinfully infected and led into the
 ‘ worst; and because of the covetousness of priests,
 ‘ and pride, and the boast that they have and make
 ‘ of their dignity and power, destroy not only
 ‘ the virtues of the priesthood in priests themselves,
 ‘ but also over this, it stirreth God to take great
 ‘ vengeance both upon the Lords and upon the Com-
 ‘ mons which suffer these priests charitably.’ And
 he farther saith, in answer to the Bishop, in these
 words, viz. ‘ That a proud priest may be known,
 ‘ when he denieth to follow Christ and his apostles
 ‘ in wilful poverty, and other virtues; and covet-
 ‘ eth worldly worship, and taketh it gladly; and
 ‘ gathereth together with pleading, menacing, or
 ‘ with flattering, or with Simony and worldly goods;
 ‘ and most, if a priest busie him not chiefly in him-
 ‘ self, and after in all other men and women, after
 ‘ his cunning and power, to withstand sin.’

And farther, I find by the Ecclesiastical Histories;
 written by Eusebius, mentioning Appolonius against
 Montanus, saith thus, ‘ That Montanus fed the
 ‘ the maintainers of his doctrine with sums of money,
 ‘ and great hire, to preach; which was forbidden in
 ‘ the Holy Scripture, that prophets should take
 ‘ hire. Christ commanded his disciples, to take no
 ‘ man’s gold, or silver, or apparel, or two coats;
 ‘ and saith, by their fruits you shall know them,
 Mat. 10. Luke 9. Mark 7. Euseb. lib. 5. cap. 16.
 And farther saith, ‘ That if hire be taken by a pro-
 B phet

phet, he is then no longer a prophet: let all that
 be false be tried conditional.'

These are the faithful sayings of these men of famous memory, who in their time bore a faithful testimony against the priests in their days, and other abominations and innovations, brought in by those who were in the apostacy, since the days of Christ and his apostles, which I have faithfully set down; that so those who say, What is become of our forefathers, who suffered in the flames for witnessing against the superstition and idolatry of those times, in which they lived? may see themselves where they are, and what they are doing while they ask, what is become of their forefathers; and yet they themselves are found walking in the steps of those men who persecuted and martyred those whom they call their forefathers: but they are indeed monstrous children, or rather the children of those who put the martyrs to death; as by their practices they make it appear, in their maintaining like priests (though now called ministers) and their unrighteous wages, which their forefathers witnessed against with the loss of their lives. O blush for shame to behold thy practices, lest thou partaking of their sins, partake of their plagues also; and come out from those ways, lest thou fall together with them, as thou hast holpen to uphold the enemies of the Lord. For as it is truly recorded in the same book of martyrs in these words, viz. 'Whosoever do receive the holy order, by giving
 ' of money, is not a priest, *secundem rem et nomen*, but
 ' to say the truth, he desireth to be called a priest,
 ' that is, to be a priest *secundum nomen tantum*; and
 ' such a priest, which is a priest in name only, is no
 ' priest, no more than St. Mary painted, is St. Mary;
 ' nor a false doctor, a doctor, but no doctor; and a
 ' man painted, is not a man, but no man. And thus
 ' such a priest in name only, is not a priest; because
 ' that

' that all faithful men do firmly believe, with St.
 ' Gregory, that no man buying the holy orders, may
 ' then be called a priest; as he saith, they who buy
 ' or sell holy orders can be no priests; whereupon
 ' it is written, *Anathema dandi, et anathema accipiendi*;
 ' that is, he is accursed that gives, and he no less
 ' that takes.' And those who are now found with
 the marks of the false prophets and priests upon
 them, are, as was said then, *uni voce natura*; but
 yet *æqui voce in moribus*; that is, *one in nature, though*
different in manners. And thou who art such a one,
 or thou who maintains such a one, as is made a priest
 for his money, or by the arts learned from men, and
 natural knowledge gotten by study; though such a
 one be called a gifted man, yet he will be found to
 be one whom Christ never sent; and his marks
 make manifest who sent him: if he preach for hire,
 and divine for money, or take any thing by com-
 pact or agreement with any people, whatsoever
 name they go under, filthy lucre is not far off,
 and poison enters, and eats like a canker, until ut-
 ter consumption overtake. And let none think to
 excuse themselves with saying, How shall I live, or
 how shall my wife and children be maintained?
 Or in putting it off with saying, I preach not for
 money; if so, let thy money and gifts alone, and
 preach without any (if thou must needs preach)
 for it is actions and not words only, by which
 the ministers of Christ were made to differ from
 antichrist's ministers in all ages, since the begin-
 ning. And if thou dost not preach freely hence-
 forth, and leave taking thy gifts and rewards, then
 I shall conclude it is for money; and the way thou
 runnest so greedily and zealously in, is the way of
 Balaam; and thou art to take heed to thyself, lest
 the day come upon thee, when thou shalt desire to
 die the death of the righteous, and thy latter end

to be like his; but then it will be too late, and Esau's portion must be thine, who hast profaned the name of the Lord, and sold thy birth-right for a morsel of bread; even that sweet peace and content in God, which, it may be, sometime thy soul hath tasted; but consulting with flesh and blood, and looking out at the examples of others, and how deliciously they fare every day, thy mind hath been beguiled from the simplicity that is in Christ; and so thou hast put thyself from under God's care, and now art caring for thyself, and wife and children; and thy life is miserable to thee, although thou puttest as good a face upon it as thou canst. Yet in secret have many gone mourning because of these things, and at last have sunk under the burthen of them; for whose sake my soul hath mourned in secret, and I have been pained within me, to consider how hard a thing it is for such a one to be saved, and what shifts they have found out to keep their gifts, livings, and rewards, under several pretences, covers, and distinctions; as that they are free gifts, given of old, and no man now is at all prejudiced by the receiving of them. And in their saying, If I did not, some else would; and some saying, as they say Luther once said, That as in time past, the ministers of Satan were maintained by them, and those that did work for the Devil; so now, they for a time may be employed for the service of God, to maintain his ministers, and his pure worship. And besides, say some, if I go out of them, a worse may come in my room: and such like reasonings have mine ears heard from some, who are accounted not the least amongst many, and others look at the esteem they have amongst great men, and therefore say, If I forsake taking gifts, they will conclude me a sectary; and then I shall be more retired, and grow more in acquaintance

ance with God, and delight in communion with him; and so by my faithfulness to him, I shall stand a witness for God against greater abominations than these; knowing that God reveals his secrets to them that fear him, and depart from iniquity, and hate every evil way; and so at last shall lose all my acquaintance and familiars, and shall become as an owl in the desert, and pelican in the wilderness, and like a sparrow chirping alone upon the house top; which I do now prevent, by walking in a way wherein I have many good men of my side, and company enough to go along with me; and in hopes, as the times mend, to come to greater preferment: and as long as I take no more than just doth maintain me, I know not but if any man will give me a gift, or living, I may take it, and do good to others with it; for out of my gift I may maintain, and contribute to maintain, divers gifted brethren, that they may be serviceable in the Lord's work; and other good deeds I may do with my gift, which if I had it not, I could not do.

Oh take heed, lest the charge against Job be made good against you, "Regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen, rather than affliction: behold, God exalteth by his power; who teacheth like him?" Job xxxvi. 21, 22. Dost thou not know, that the least evil is not to be done, that good may come of it; and how that "Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry?" 1 Sam. xv. And because you priests have rejected and neglected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected you from being his ministers; and as Saul for his disobedience to God's command, "the kingdom was rent from him;" though he had observed part thereof, and that which he left undone, was as he thought for the best, and could not be reckoned a neglect, or rejection; and there-

fore said, with confidence to the prophet of the Lord, when he came to him, "Blessed be thou of the Lord, " for I have performed the commandment of the " Lord," &c. What meaneth then the taking hire and gifts, and preaching for money, and taking men's goods by force from them, that for conscience sake cannot maintain a hireling priest? "Hath not " God more delight in obeying his voice, than in " burnt offerings; and in obedience, than in sacri- " fice?" And to live by faith, and take no thought, nor staff, nor scrip; but like the children of Abraham, walk in his steps, and go when he saith Go; and come, when he saith Come; and plant a vineyard, and eat of the fruit of it; but eat not of the fruit of other men's labours, that have received none of your spirituals, and therefore cannot give you their carnals, nor mind the fleece nor the wool, but mind the Lord of the harvest, who gives his penny to them he sends forth. And though they took nothing with them when they went out, when they returned he asked them, if they wanted any thing; and they said No. And none of the apostles of Christ took any more than what was freely given them by the saints, that had reaped of their spirituals, and that only to supply their present necessities; but never took any thing by constraint; neither coveted any man's silver, or gold, or apparel, or took any thing for preaching, but preached freely, and took what they had as free alms; and such cannot want, while there is any of the love of God in people; "For he that hath this world's goods, and " seeth his brother want, how dwells the love of " God in him?" And if this is shewed to every brother, how much more to him that labours in the gospel of Christ? Therefore it may well, and upon good ground, be suspected, that either the gospel that those preach, that take any thing for preach-
ing,

ing, as hire, or as wages is due for work, or any other gift, for to preach, which gift I cannot have, if I preach not, is not the gospel of Christ, which the preachers of it were to live upon, but another gospel; seeing by experience we see, that the gospel which these men preach would starve them, if it were not for the justices of peace, and judges favour, which causes peoples goods to be taken from them against their wills*, and given to the priests, contrary to the law of God, and these nations, as before is proved: or else, that they are no ministers of Christ's sending forth, for whom he always did, and ever will provide maintenance, and furnish them with his presence, to the end of the world; so that such cannot complain of want. But those, who have not his presence with them, are full of complaints to parliaments, to councils, to judges, to justices, and who not, that they have the least hope of relief from; by which things we know them to be none of the ministers of Christ's sending: or else, lastly, there is none of God's love in people; and if they beget not men and women into God's love, what do they preach for? For strife, for debate, and malice, and envy, and hatred, and covetousness, and pride, and worldly greatness, and respect of persons, because of advantage, and taking hire, and paying hire for preaching, and giving gifts, and taking gifts for preaching, and taking tithes, and giving tithes for preaching; which, since Christ's ascension, are all marks of carnal people, and carnal priests; and the word of reconciliation is not committed to them, as it was to the ministers of Christ of old; and there were witnesses against such in all ages, by some that were faithful, as by these few precedents out of the Book of Martyrs may appear, with many witnesses more,

* For the statute of Edw. 6. gives not the tenth.

both before and since, which might be produced out of several authors of no mean esteem: but those who will not turn and repent, and be washed from their marks of falsity and deceit, must have their portion with the deceivers; and the deceived, that pay them for their deceit, the wages of unrighteousness, as aforesaid, will be marked also, if they speedily repent not; but not with the mark of Christ's sheep (for they know his voice, and a stranger's voice they will not follow) but of the goats: and of which sentence that famous reformer John Hus hath, by way of prophecy, foretold; and also of a deliverance that shall come to the church and people of God, as it is recorded in the Book of Martyrs in these words:

‘ Moreover, hereupon note, and mark by the
 ‘ way, that the church of God cannot be reduced,
 ‘ to his former dignity, or be reformed, before all
 ‘ things be made new: the truth whereof is plain
 ‘ by the temple of Solomon, like as the clergy and
 ‘ priests, so also the people and laity; or unless all
 ‘ such as now be addict to avarice, from the least to
 ‘ the most, be first converted and reclaimed, as
 ‘ well the people, as clergy and priest: albeit as
 ‘ my mind now giveth me, I believe rather the
 ‘ first; that is, that then shall rise new people,*
 ‘ formed after the new man, which is created after
 ‘ God: of the which people new clerks and priests
 ‘ shall come, and be taken; which all shall hate
 ‘ covetousness, and the glory of this life, hastening
 ‘ to a heavenly conversation; notwithstanding all
 ‘ these things shall come to pass, and be brought
 ‘ by little and little, in order of times, dispensed of
 ‘ God for the same purpose; and this God doth,
 ‘ and will do, for his own mercy and goodness,
 ‘ and for the riches of his great longanimity and

‘ patience, giving time and space of repentance
 ‘ to them that have long lain in their sins, to
 ‘ amend and fly from the face of the Lord’s fury,
 ‘ while that in like manner the carnal people, and
 ‘ carnal priests, successively and in time, shall fall
 ‘ away, and be consumed as with the moth,’ &c.

And farther, it is yet more sure out of that record, against which lies no averment, viz. Jeremiah xxiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. and throughout that chapter:
 “ Wo be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter
 “ the sheep of my pasture, saith the Lord. There-
 “ fore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, against the
 “ pastors that feed my people, Ye have scattered
 “ my flock, and driven them away, and have not
 “ visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the
 “ evil of your doings, saith the Lord; and I will
 “ gather the remnant of my flock out of all coun-
 “ tries, whither I have driven them, and will bring
 “ them again to their folds, and they shall be fruit-
 “ ful and increase; and I will set up shepherds over
 “ them, which shall feed them; and they shall fear
 “ no more, nor be dismayed, neither shall they be
 “ lacking, saith the Lord. Behold, the days come,
 “ saith the Lord, that I will raise up unto David
 “ a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and
 “ prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice
 “ in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved,
 “ and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is his name
 “ whereby he shall be called,

“ The Lord our Righteousness.”

AN

AN
EPISTLE OF LOVE

TO

ALL THAT ARE IN PRESENT SUFFERINGS,

Whether Inwardly or Outwardly.

Upon the first Day of the fourth Month, 1660, as I was travelling upon the way, there came upon my Heart a deep Sense of your Conditions; whereupon I was pressed in Spirit to write these following Lines.

MANY have been the warnings, counsel and advice, which have been given unto you from the Lord, out of the love that he bears unto you, who would not have you to perish, but rather that you might repent, and do your first works, and live; and therefore hath he sent unto you of his servants, early and late, to forewarn you of the evils and dangers that were coming upon you: but your hearts were so hardened, through the deceitfulness of sin, and you choaked with the cares of this life, and your minds so filled and taken up with the present enjoyments of worldly delights, and fleshly ease, that there was no room or entrance for any thing that came unto you, though delivered in never so much tenderness and bowels of affection, from a true sight and deep sense of what must unavoidably overtake you: because you, like Jesurun, were grown fat, and kicked against what could be said unto you; looking upon yourselves as so enriched with worldly glory and delights, and so decked therewith, that you sat as queens, as if none could pluck you from your throne, or seats, because

because of the sureness and firmness of your standing, as you thought and concluded in yourselves. And your work was, how to climb up higher, and to soar aloft in your glory, beyond any that had been before you; that so your families might be great, and your names renowned to posterity, and your issues enriched with your gettings and possessions; so that you were just like the wild ass colt upon the mountains and high hills, snuffing up the wind, and kicking the heel, and laughing at, and having in derision, all those that came unto you (in the name of the Lord) with the word of the Lord; concluding it to be but the fancy of a drunken brain, or the products and offspring of a precipitated zeal, without a true understanding. And so you made light of it, and made no doubt in yourselves, to shake off those things, like Paul's shaking off the viper from his hand; and (like Sampson) to go forth as at other times; but knew not how, by that fleshly confidence, and carnal security, and worldly delights and pleasures, which had made you (like drunken men) not only fearless and careless, but also senseless of what could be said unto you, or done against you. So high had you made your nests, that you feared not the hand that could pluck you down: and therefore it was your manner (in that light, elevated and transported spirit) either with scorn and disdain, wholly to reject and refuse either the hearing of such words and counsels as were tendered unto you, either by message in words or writing, or otherwise, to receive them in the feigned humility, and complimentary spirit; putting off the more serious hearing or reading thereof (with Fœlix) until a more convenient season; satisfying yourselves with this imaginary conceit, that you had pleased and given content unto the persons that so spake or writ unto you; this being your utmost

most end and design, if by all you could but procure popular applause, and ingratiate yourselves into any party or interest, thereby to corroborate and strengthen your seat and standing; and all your confessions, professions, and acknowledgments, were but like Absalom in the day of his advance, saying with him in your hearts, "O that all men would come unto us," that there might be none to oppose you, or disquiet your ease, and "we would do them justice!" but this was but to palliate your worldly interests, that you were with so much eagerness seeking to exalt. But now is your month come upon you, and the day that was threatened, and you forewarned of it, hath overtaken you; and it is a day of gloominess and darkness, and thick clouds; so that it appears to be night, rather than day, and the sun to be set and gone down, and the shadow of death approaches, and fears and amazements seem to compass you about as a mighty host, and your names and posterities to be blotted out, and ignominy and reproach to be cast upon you, and to be your portion, from the basest of men. And instead of crisping-pins, and gorgeous attires and apparel, and mincing with your feet, and sweet fumes, and odours and smells, shall be stench, and the smell of sulphur; and that which shall be an abhorring and a loathing unto them, that you have trampled upon, and thought too mean to converse withal. And that breeding, which you are crept into, and that conformity to the world, and the greatness and glory thereof, and that fellowship and communion which you are increasing apace, with those who have their portion in this life, even unto them also shall you be a disdain and an hissing; so that you are become, like Israel of old, as the vines amongst the trees of the forest, which when it hath left its bearing, and bringeth forth no fruit, is good for nothing, not
so

so much as to make a pin of, so as to hang a vessel
 thereon, but is only become as fewel for the fire.
 Wo is me, wo is me for you! what will become of
 you? For I am pained, I am pained, my bowels
 roll within me, because of their utter desolation that
 is coming upon you, even to the utmost! And then
 shall those that you have scorned, laugh at your ca-
 lamity, and mock when your fear comes, which shall
 come upon you as an armed man; and you shall not
 be able to withstand his dread, because of the load
 of guilt, and the weight of sin, that lies upon your
 consciences, and presseth you down, and whelms you,
 and plunges you into the utter darkness, even unto
 the thick darkness, that may be felt. For your time
 of working is over, and the night in which no man
 can work is come upon you; and though you seek to
 fly as upon dromedaries, and to make a league with
 death and hell, and by your compliances with, and
 your calling to the rocks, the hills, and the moun-
 tains; yet shall they not be able to hide you from
 the wrath of the Lamb, nor to shelter you from
 the indignation of him that is too strong for you.
 And though you fly upon the swift, a swifter shall
 overtake; for you shall not be able to escape his fury,
 though you fly to the uttermost parts of the earth,
 yet there shall his hands find you out. And you
 have numbered him amongst transgressors, and
 hardened your necks against his reproof in your
 own hearts and consciences, and have had them in
 derision that have directed you thereunto, to take
 heed and to obey his counsel, lest you perished in the
 gainfaying, and the spirit of grace ceased striving
 with you; and then, he that hath suffered long, and
 borne the iniquity, withdraws his shoulder, and the
 word of his power, whereby he upholds all things:
 and then you shall bear your own iniquity, and feel
 the weight and burthen thereof; and then shall you
 know

know by woful experience, and drink of the cup of his fury, without mixture of mercy, or support. And who is able then to abide or stand, when thus he ministers pure wrath and displeasure in the fierceness of his indignation, against and upon the rebellious, who would not hearken in the day of their prosperity, but were grown rich, and full, and wise, and strong, and said in themselves, " We have need of nothing; tush, our tongues are our own, who shall us controul? For we know what it is to be religious, and to profess God and Christ, and the scriptures; for these things we have professed and known, and we were once zealous in them, and for them, and were tender-hearted, and broken in our spirits, and then could we weep and mourn, and pray and fast, and tell of our experiences, and durst not commit sin, nor do any thing that we knew to be evil, because of a fear that was upon us. But now we are past those things, and mind not the feeling of them; but account those as possessed with a fanatick spirit, that say, that they are moved by the Spirit of the Lord, to mind us of our former years and by-past days of tenderness, and speak so much unto us of feeling that broken heart, and contrite spirit, and true thirst and hunger after the living God, which sometimes we felt; and condemn and cry against all knowledge, and speculative notions, above and beyond the feelings, as that which will not avail, nor stand in stead in the day of the Lord. And these in ourselves we condemned, and the spirit by which they spake unto us, we judged to be fanatical; and therefore it is justly come upon us, to have that name given unto us by our enemies, which we in our hearts and spirits gave unto and said of our friends: for if we had not so looked upon them, we would have taken their counsel. But we looked upon those former times of tenderness in religion,

to

to be the days of our minority and infancy; and we are now come beyond those things, and some of us grown past feeling, into a belief, that there is nothing sin, but what a man imagines so to be; and so are soared aloft, and mounted up upon the wings of reason and state-policy, looking upon that to be religion wherein the self-safety and security is most preserved and promoted. And so have concluded within ourselves, that the ground of our former trouble inwardly, and the ground of the like trouble that is upon others now, did and doth arise from the distrust of our reason; and so have concluded all inward feeling and possessing of the presence of God, and the light of his countenance, to be but the strength of fancy or imagination. And this apprehension and belief hath been strengthened in us by the many experiences and examples that in our observations we have taken notice of; namely, what a general and universal defection and falling away there hath been in all sorts of persons, in the several and variety of judgments and opinions, that have sprung up, and the respective confidence that they have had of their ways and opinions, and their incidency and proneness to be taken with the glory and riches of this present world, and equally with a zeal to pursue after them, when they have had an opportunity in their hands to enrich themselves thereby, having observed all sorts, and tried all sorts of judgments and opinions. And when they have been tried with opportunities, as aforesaid, they have been found too light, and lost their zeal and tenderness in religion: and therefore from these observations, experiences, and trials, we have been strengthened in our belief, that to get wealth, and live at ease, and secure our places, and to comply to any man, or with any thing, in order to this end, hath been goodness enough, and the very religion
of

of our hearts; though with our tongues and our lips we have spoken and professed otherwise." O thou exalted above the stars, who art climbed up another way, and hast set up thy nest on high, and fenced it about, as with impregnable walls, whose fearedness and confidence is all thy safety; the Lord is undermining thy foundation, and he is bringing thee down as with a mighty hand, and he is causing thy fall to be as a mill-stone into the sea, and he is making thine enemies to rule over thee; even thou that hast been in thy jollity, and making merry, and sending and receiving the gifts, in this way wherein the witnesses have lain slain in the streets of this great city; the Spirit of Life from the Lord is entering into them again, and they shall stand upon their feet, and fire shall come down from heaven, and consume their enemies, and they shall torment all that dwell upon the earth. Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, O ye stout-hearted and stiff-necked, whose hearts are become as an iron sinew, and whose sins are written as with the point of a diamond: O tremble, tremble at the word of the Lord, which saith, "He gave you space to repent, "but you repented not!" Wherefore a bed of torment is preparing for you, and the cup which you gave to others shall you drink, and you shall squeeze out the dregs thereof: Wo and misery is coming upon you, and languishing and distress shall cover you; and because you will not hear the voice of the rod in the day of your fulness, you shall hear the voice of wrath and desolation, and flood upon flood shall come upon you, and billow upon billow shall overflow you; so that you shall not be able to escape, nor fly from his presence.

O hear, hear the word of the Lord, and hearken, that yet, notwithstanding, your souls may live; and if it be possible, may be redeemed out of the land of

of darkness, and the deep captivity in which they are plunged. Do not fly, nor make a league with thine enemies; neither let despair and unbelief swallow thee up; but bear the indignation, because thou hast sinned. Lay down thy back, that the plowers may plow deep furrows; lay thy mouth in the dust, and say, "I have sinned, I have sinned; and for my iniquity are these things come upon me, and because of the weight thereof, am I pressed down; and if the Lord arise not, I must perish under them." Think not upon revenge; "for vengeance is the Lord's, and he will repay it." For thy rising up, and thy restoration, and thy recovery, must not be by an arm of flesh, nor by a bow of steel, but by the revealed arm of the Lord, that must bring salvation to thee; and therefore must thou be patient, and still, and quiet, and ascribe righteousness to the Lord, until he arise. For through fore judgment must thou be delivered, and all thy ways must be hedged up with thorns, that thou mayest not be able to pass from under his hand, nor from the smart of his stroke: for this is the day of the recovery, not only of thy soul out of the pit, that waits in the patience and long-suffering, and out of the mire and the clay, wherein thy feet have stuck fast, so that thou hast not been able to run in the ways of righteousness; but also, of the recovery of the corn, and the wine, and the oil, which he gave unto thee, and thou hadst forgotten that he gave it thee, that thou mayest return unto him, from whom thou art fallen by thine iniquity. For was it not better with thee in the day of thy meanness and poverty, not only of spirit, but outwardly, when thou hadst not those possessions in the earth as now thou hast, nor faredst so deliciously as now thou dost? Was it not better with thee then, than it is now? Let the witness of God answer. And therefore like

a bull in the net must thou be cast, who hast been seeking liberty and largeness for thyself, but hast not cared how much others were in straightness and captivity; and therefore is the day come upon thee, wherein the same measure, thou measuredst to others, is measured to thyself. Therefore thou must bear in patience, that the seed thou mayest know, which the Lord's love is unto, and feel it in thyself; that which hath suffered long, even all this time of thy wantonness. For this is the seed which cries unto God, though thou regardest not the cry thereof, because of thy fulness, and because of the noise that hath been in thy heart, both about keeping what thou hast already gotten, and how to enlarge thy barns to hold more; but the cry of the poor hath not been regarded, even that seed in thee, which hath groaned for deliverance; and sometimes, because of the anguish thereof, thy soul cryed out for distress; though, through the varity of thy pleasures, thou endeavourest to murder it, and to stop its cry.

Is it not now an acceptable time, to speak a word in due season to thee, from one that is sensible of thy burthen, and travails with thee for thy deliverance? O that thou wouldst hear, that thy soul might live! And even now, when the Lord is as one retired into his place, and all thy comforts and lovers seem to stand at a distance from thee, and thou art as one termed desolate and forsaken, and the wrath of the enemy is ready to swallow thee up, in telling thee, there is no hope for thee, and that the day of thy visitation is over, and that the pit will open its mouth, and swallow thee up in the sight of all thine enemies. Arise, arise, thou captive, thou exile, thou outcast of Israel, thou that art termed forsaken, both in thine own eyes, and in the eyes of all that behold thee; this is the day of thy deep visitation,
hear

hear the voice of the rod, and know the hand of him that smites with it, that through the chastisings and the rebukings, thy soul may be recovered. O cease from man, and from all revengeful thoughts, and hearken not to the counsel of thine own heart, neither lend an ear to the wicked, and lean not to thy own understanding. For God's thoughts are not as thy thoughts, neither his ways like thine; thine are thoughts and ways of evil, his of good: therefore judge the disquietness of thy mind with that grace and light, that gives thee the sight and the sense of it, and say not, "He hath shut up his loving-kindness in forgetfulness, or will be merciful no more." Fear not thou, worm Jacob, though all tread upon thee, be thou still; for thy deliverance must be from the Lord: and that is the seed, that lies low under all, that is dumb, and opens not his mouth in revenge; that lies down in his will, and drinks the cup, because it is the Father's good pleasure: for that is the seed, to which the blessings belongs; and that is that which must hear the word of the Lord, and come out of Egypt, to worship God in his own land, that that may be set free; from which he cannot withhold his bowels, nor the strength of his love; but that it might be set free, that he might render double unto it, beyond whatever entered into thy heart to conceive. And this is the seed that the Lord hath blessed, and that can be content both to abound, and to suffer want; and to be abased, and how to receive at the hand of the Lord, and give it again with the same freedom that it was received: and though it hath nothing in the world, as to the enjoyments of the world, yet it possesseth all things, in that its kingdom is not of this world. Neither is it a seed of so low a descent, and so ignoble an offspring, as to have its delight or joy in this world:

but though it hath lain amongst the pots, and been as in the manger, yet must it have the wings of a dove, and, in the simplicity and innocency thereof, must it mount up over the world, and have its rest with its father Abraham. And this is the seed that follows his steps, and forsakes all, to go to the land that the Lord shews it; and believes in the hope, against the hope, and staggers not through the weakness of faith, by considering the reasonings of the earthly birth, or fleshly spirit; but is strong in the faith, and gives glory unto God, and submits unto him, to let him do what seemeth good in his sight.

O Friends! had you hearkened unto this, and let it gone free, then had not this day come upon you, nor this hour of darkness overtaken you; and therefore now be wise, and receive the instructions of the Almighty, who speaks unto you in the secrets of your hearts, that you may hear his voice, and live. For he is saying to you, as once he did to Adam, in the cool of the day, now the heats are over, Where are ye? And what have ye been doing? Have ye not sinned, in eating that which was forbidden, and in feeding upon that which was likely to make wise, and was beautiful to the eye, and pleasant to the taste, but is become as gall and wormwood in the belly? In this day of adversity, when you come to consider where you are, and what you have been doing, are you not indeed naked? And are you not flying, as he was, to the bushes, and for shelter to every imagination and injection that springs up in your minds, and counsel that is given to you from the earthly spirit, either in yourselves or others? And are you not sewing of fig-leaves, and making of coverings for yourselves (to mitigate the offence) as he did, by saying "The woman that thou gavest me, deceived me?" And so you are covering and hiding by excuses

cuses and pretences, that which in the day of your simplicity and tenderness you would not have been ashamed of, and since, in the day of your prosperity, have gloried in as your crown. O do not so, for the Lord will not be mocked; for such as you have sown, such shall you reap. Be not like Israel of old, to add evil to evil, not only in forsaking the fountain, but hewing out of inventions and excuses, which will not hold in this day of your distress; but be upright-hearted and single to God, seeking out no covers, nor sinful compliance, lest you lose this day of visitation also, and the little glimmering of hopes that yet remains for you, if you persist not in your wickedness, but on the contrary, if you do, ye shall go down to the pit, where there is no remembrance of him.

And you that are, or have been, Officers and Soldiers in the Army, and are under present Sufferings or Burthens.

What need you be troubled? Or what true cause have you to be disquieted, if so be the present officers and soldiers can govern and command better than you have done, or than hath been in years past; if the officers of the army be more temperate, more humble, more self-denying, and less given to covetousness, and to seek great things for themselves, than you did, when you were in command? And if the present officers of the army be more tender of the liberties of tender consciences, and of the just liberties of the people, and more careful of the breach of the privileges of parliament and of all other authorities, the rule for God, and in his fear; that are a terror to evil doers, and a praise of, and encouragement to, them that do well: and if the

present army are less in compliance with particular interests, for self safety and advantage, than you were, what ground or cause have you to be troubled, or to seek restoration to your places and trusts? And if they do not exceed you in righteousness, holiness, and justice, and good discipline of the army, have they not you for an example before them? Who for these things have cast you off, and made your habitations desolate, and your names to become a stench, and your families a reproach, and all your righteousness and good that you have done, and victories that you have obtained, are buried in oblivion, and your defamation doth sound beyond your fame in times past. Is not the Lord righteous? Or is his arm shortened? Or are his bowels shut up? Or is it not all one with him, to save by many, or by few; by strength, or without strength; and to overturn and overthrow these also, which have succeeded you, if they shall fall short of your righteousness, or those steps wherein you walked, as to the governing and ordering of your several trusts? Shall not the Lord be avenged on them also, if they provoke him, as you did; and overthrow them as he hath done you, and that with a sorer destruction, and a greater hand of displeasure, because they have had you as a lively example before them, whom the Lord hath cast out in their fight; but lust after evil things, and the glory of the world, as you did, and were rejected of him? And surely if the same wickedness and ungodliness overtake them, that was found amongst you, their fall shall be great, and they shall rise no more: and therefore leave it to the Lord, and seek not your own revenge; neither think by rebellion, treachery, or hypocrisy, to prevail; "For judgment" is the Lord's, and he will repay it:" and if they persist to do wickedly, and to exceed you in un-
righteous,

righteousness, they shall all likewise perish; for righteousness he will have set up. And the end of all the changes and overturnings in England, it is not that a may-pole should be set up, or that healths should be drunk, to the confusion of Zion, but that a king should reign in righteousness, and that the sons and daughters of Zion should rejoice therein.

And to you that are, or have been, Rulers or Governors of these Nations, and are either at present Suffering, or in fear of future Sufferings.

Do not you emulate, nor condemn those into whose hands the present government is committed; neither seek after revenge, or suffer your hearts to boil, because you are thrown down, and they got up. If they will hear the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and judge with equity therein, and relieve the oppressed, and let the captive go free, and respect no man's person in judgment, neither divert justice, because of any man's opinion or persuasion; but equally administer distributive justice to all, and not be offended at one man, because he could not put off his hat, and give him flattering titles; and therefore would do him no justice, but trample upon him, whom all trampled upon; and exalt that party, that was most in esteem, and gratify him, who could respect men's persons with his hat in his hand, and give him flattering titles, though his cause was worse: if those in your places now will not do so, but equally distribute law and justice unto all men, without respecting any man's person or opinion, and that at a cheaper rate, and with less delay; if the present rulers and governors do so, what cause have you to be angry, because the Lord hath thrown down you, and raised up them that are more righteous? And what though

he be as the younger brother, that professed not so much, but practised more; shall not your hypocrisy remain as a blot upon you, while as their activity and justice shall be their renown? But on the contrary, if they exceed you in oppression, cruelty, and injustice, and make greater inroads and breaches upon the law of the nation, and just liberties of the people, and let loose the reins of government, so that people may take their swing in ungodliness, and act iniquity without control; and the consciences of the upright be oppressed, because of their tenderness towards God, and the things appertaining to his kingdom; and so he that departs from iniquity becomes a prey, and the gaols in these nations be fuller of the servants of the Lord, than they were in your days; and that only, because they cannot prostrate their consciences to the wills of men: and if their meetings together to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth be more obstructed, and they abused by the rude and baser sort of people, and that because of the remissness and backwardness of those in authority, to put a curb unto them, or to execute their places with faithfulness against evil doers, according to their trust, and the laws of the nation; will not the Lord cast them out also, as he hath done you before them? And is not his power the same, to dis-throne all unrighteousness in what person or persons soever it be found? And therefore why should you be wrath, or your countenance fallen? If you had done well, should not you have been accepted? And if these be found doing evil, shall not they be rejected also? Or will the Lord let these into his favour, if sin lies at their door; whenas he shut you out before them for the same thing? And therefore be still and quiet in your minds, and mind the work of your day, and let them alone to theirs, which is, to humble yourselves under

der the mighty hand of God, and be abased in his sight, because of your unfaithfulness, and the treachery that was found within your gates, that so you may be reconciled to God, and one unto another, before it be too late, and the day pass over your heads, and so you be overtaken unawares, doing the work of the night; as, seeking revenge, and the overthrow or disturbance of the present power, which the Lord requires not at your hands; but to leave him to execute righteousness upon the evil doers, and to wound the hairy scalp of all his enemies; for he will be avenged, and that right speedily, against all that hate Zion.

To you that are called Publick Preachers, or Ministers of the Gospel, and are under present Sufferings, or possessed with fear, that you shall suffer either in relation to your Places or Consciences.

Why are you afraid? And wherefore are your hearts disquieted? If you have preached the gospel in season, and out of season, will not that keep you in peace? Or is not your gospel, the gospel of peace? Or are you afraid, because you made use of the gospel, to preach up war? If you have discharged your duties faithfully, and sought no man's goods, but their good; if so, will not the good overcome the evil? And if you suffer for righteousness sake, are you not blessed? And if you can live upon the gospel, will not that maintain you, and save you? Why are you then troubled?

If another generation, more righteous than you, spring up; and those that have been long a humbling, and under a sharp rebuke, be restored to their places again, and you put out; and if they preach better, and live better, that their moderation

tion may be known unto all men; and that they are not so greedy of filthy lucre, as you were; nor use that rigor, and severity, and inhumanity, which some of you have done, in casting poor people into prison, and separating man and wife, until they have died in a gaol, and that for a thing of nought, as for smoke-penny, and a garden-penny, and such like trifles as should not be named amongst Christians, much less amongst those who call themselves the ministers of the gospel; and all this, because for conscience-sake they could not let them gather that had not scattered, nor him reap that had not sown, nor his ox feed in that corn which he had not trodden out, nor pay him wages whom he never hired, neither did any work for him: if those ministers, that come after you, shall not do these things, nor make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, by serving the times, and complying with worldly interests, to enrich themselves, and fare deliciously thereby; but shall at all seasons preach freely, giving good example both in life and doctrine; oppressing no man's conscience, but giving freely, and freely receiving; not following your steps, but the steps of Christ and his apostles, who chose to obey God rather than man; and not to comply for self-safety and advantage, who spake as the spirit gave them utterance; and not what men commanded, contrary thereto; will not the Lord bless them? But if these, that come in your places, shall follow your steps, in all or any of the things aforesaid, will not the Lord drive them out, and cast them off, for their rebellion and unfaithfulness, as he hath done, and is doing of you before them? And therefore why should you be troubled, except for the load of guilt, and weight of oppression, and merciless cruelty, that lies upon you? And for these things you ought to be humbled, that if it
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be possible you may be recovered out of the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; that so your souls may be saved, in this day of your visitation and sore chastisement that is coming upon you, and you restored to your former integrity, and uprightness of heart, which sometimes some of you were acquainted with, before you walked in the way of Balaam, to attempt to curse Israel, or to run greedily for gifts and rewards. O that there were an ear open, to hear the voice of this chastisement, that your souls might be recovered out of the snare of the enemy.

To all those that are in present Sufferings in their Hearts and Minds, because they do not understand the End of the Lord in these late Transactions.

Know ye the seed of God, even Abraham's seed; and as that comes to be raised, and brought forth, and bear rule in your hearts, so shall ye understand the mind of the Lord, and he will not hide from you the thing that he doth. Are you strangers in Israel, that you know not the causes and provocations that the Lord hath had from day to day, from a gainfaying and disobedient people, who draw near him with their lips, but their hearts were far from him; and who said, "Is not the Lord amongst us?" "No evil shall come unto us:" who had provoked him to jealousy from day to day; and after many a warning given unto them by the servants of the Lord, and his overturning time after time, yet would they not hearken, but rebelled more and more, and continued to oppress the innocent, and for their own ends gratified the ungodly, and cried up those whom the Lord by his word cried against? And not only so, but what wickedness was there found with-

in their gates, and injustice in their courts, and pride and fulness of bread within their palaces, exceeding any that had been before them; besides, their profession of religion, made subservient to state policy; brother betraying brother, and one friend undermining another, and all to promote self, which the Lord had thrown down in others, and they, in an eminent way, were setting it up in themselves? How could the Lord but reckon for these things? Was not his suffering long, and his patience stretched out to the uttermost, and the measure of their iniquities full? And was it not then righteous with the Lord, to give them up into the hands of the treacherous dealer, who themselves had dealt treacherously one with another, and to others? And so hath he repaid them with that which they requited others withal. Therefore say not you, Why hath the Lord done this? Nor busy your minds or thoughts about the cause of his dealings; but mind that in your own hearts, that accuseth you for your treachery against the Lord, who hath shewed thee, O man, what is good, "to deal justly, to walk uprightly, to shew mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God." Keep thou to that in thine own heart; for that is that which may be known of God, which is manifested in thee: and by that he shews thee, O man, what is good; and to that must thou take heed, lest thou drop into the same snare with those, whose fall thou art admiring, and so their case become thy case. If thou standest by faith, yet except thou believest in that within thyself, that shews thee what is good, thou canst not avoid falling likewise: neither canst thou, by beating thy brain, or musing in thine understanding, understand the end of these things; for they are too hard for thee to find out, until thou return into the sanctuary, which is the grace of
God

God manifested in thee; and thereby shalt thou learn the fear of the Lord, whereby the heart shall be kept clean, and thou kept out of their snares.

To you who are in present Power, who are raised up by the Fall and Overthrow of those that went before you.

Do not you boast yourselves in your own strength, nor glory over those who are under your feet, but consider the end of the Lord in these things. For not for your sakes hath he wrought this change, that you might glory in the arm of flesh, or exalt yourselves, because the day is yours; but know assuredly, that it was to be avenged of an hypocritical and gainsaying generation, who said, and did not. And therefore is he arisen in righteousness to plead with them, and that those, whom they have ruled over, might once more rule over them; that you by their fall might take warning, and not lust after that which they lusted after, nor oppress that which they oppressed, both in themselves and others; but that you might undo the heavy burdens, and take off every yoke, and let the oppressed go free; which if you do, both as to civil and spiritual rights, which they promised to do, but did not, then shall you prosper, and the righteous rejoice in your government: but if those things continue, for which they were cast out before you, then shall the indignation of the Lord smoke against you, and your fall be great and speedy, and that into mischief, and shall rise no more. O that you had hearts to consider the languishing state of this nation! that righteousness might be encouraged, justice promoted, sin and iniquity stopped, and you a terror to the workers thereof. Let not that be found amongst you,
which

which was found amongst them that were cast out before you, to advance any sect, party, or opinion; but he of every sect, party, or judgment, that fears God, and works righteousness, let him find protection from your government: so shall partiality be shut out, and distributive justice, and impartial righteousness be administered unto all, and run down our streets like a stream. Then shall it be well for you, that the Lord hath so long chastised you, that you might learn righteousness, and hate iniquity; so shall the nations be healed, and the distractions thereof composed, and the end of our wars attained; and you, with all that fear the Lord, shall be crowned with victory over your enemies, and love from all your friends. But on the contrary, if iniquity be sheltered under your wing, and unrighteousness, profaneness, and ungodliness, be countenanced, encouraged, or connived at; then shall the fury of the Lord smoke against you, and his righteousness shall be revealed, to throw you down, and that with an hand more eminent and remarkable, than that which brought you in; and the sound and report of your destruction and extirpation, shall exceed and go farther, and strike the nations afar off, with greater astonishment, and amazement of spirit. Even their ears shall tingle, and affrightment shall take hold upon them, because of the revelation of the righteous judgments of the Lord, against a rebellious people, whom he would have healed again and again, but they would not, but insulted and revolted yet more and more, and abused the patience and long-suffering of the Lord towards them, and turned their deliverances against the Lord, to puff and swell themselves up, beyond any that ever was before them: if this be your state, you shall perish suddenly,

ly, and that without remedy; and then shall you know, that the Lord hath spoken by me.

To all that fear the Lord, and whose Hearts are upright with him, and yet are sensible of the suffering State of the Church that is in God; because of the Oppressions, and Weights, and Burthens, that lie upon the righteous Seed.

Fear you not, nor be dismayed with any amazement; for, for your sakes will the Lord arise, and shake terribly the earth, and remove that which is shaken, that that which cannot be shaken may remain: and your heads will he lift up above all your enemies, and the day of your redemption shall draw nigh, and Satan shall be trodden under your feet, and you caught up into the mountain of the Lord, where ye shall feed upon the fat things which he hath prepared upon his holy mountain. This mountain shall you know to be over, and and on top of, all the mountains; and here you shall abide, and dwell in the dwelling-place that is upon Mount Zion; and upon all your glory shall it be a defence, and none shall be able to make you afraid: and then shall ye know him that shall stand the last upon the earth, and ye shall receive dominion from him, whereby ye shall reign with him for evermore. Therefore watch ye unto prayer, and be you diligent in the work of the Lord, that you may finish with faithfulness the testimony that he hath given you to bear for his name's sake; and know assuredly, that nothing can harm you, while you follow that which is good. And watch ye in the light of Christ, that ye may be kept out of that part, in yourselves, which appertains to this world, and the things thereof, in that good part which shall
never

never be taken from you, in which the god of this world hath no part. And there is your safety for ever, there is the faith known, that stops the mouths of lions, and rebukes the roarings of the sea, and keeps in the calm, as in an ark, when all the world shall be overwhelmed with the Lord's wrath and displeasure. Then shall you be safe, and plant the earth with righteousness; and the former things shall be passed away, and the old heaven and the old earth melted away, and passed as a scroll; and the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, shall remain, and the inhabitants therein shall rejoice, and shall sing the songs of Zion, and the songs of the lamb, the praise of him that hath saved them. For your kingdom is not of this world, but he hath chosen you to be as pilgrims and strangers in and to the world. Although your bodies be in the world, yet use it and possess it, as though you used and possessed it not; that you may be known to be the redeemed of the Lord, that are seeking a city that hath foundations; and your conversations may be known to be above the earth, with all its glory, and you be saved out of all, and raised up over all, by him that throws down, and exalts at his pleasure. This is the word of the Lord to you all, you are the Lord's host, and he will go before you, and be your rear-ward; and by you, and through you, will he bring mighty things to pass; and at the sound whereof the nations shall tremble, and at the hearing whereof the earth shall be astonished, because of the Lord's appearing in his sons and daughters: unto the brightness of whose arising, many shall come from far, and at whose feet the riches and the glory of the Gentiles shall be laid down: and these things, you that are faithful shall know. And be not you inquisitive which way the Lord will bring these things to pass;
for

for his own arm shall do it; and that not by might nor by power, but by his spirit, will he remove the mountains, and all that lets, out of the way: and therefore be not you faithless, but believing, and dwell in the patience, out of that which would limit the Holy One, either to time or means; so shall you come to the overcoming and to be more than conquerors through Christ your life, who is manifest in your mortal flesh. And as concerning the times and seasons, I need not write unto you. For you know perfectly in yourselves, that the day of the Lord so cometh, as a thief in the night; that when they shall cry peace and safety, then sudden destruction shall come upon them; for now is their hour, and the power of darkness: but dwell you in the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of his wing, and enter into your privy chambers, and shut the door till the calamity be overpast. For it shall not be long until the Lord shall visit his seed, and gather it from off the barren hills and mountains, that they that have gone astray, through the allurements, pleasures, and vanities of this world, shall be gathered into the fold; and then shall there be one fold, and one shepherd; and the sons of God shall sing together, and the morning-stars shall rejoice, and clap their hands for joy, because of so great salvation; and they that are faithful shall know and see this, and be glad: for the Lord will not leave you, nor forsake you; you that are bold, valiant, and faithful for his name, and love not your lives unto the death, that you may finish the testimony of Jesus; but are as sheep appointed for the slaughter, and are like those that are killed all the day long; yet the Lord my God will arise for your sakes, and will utter his voice from Zion, and his thunderings from Jerusalem; and you shall be glad with his salvation, to the praise of his name for ever. Amen.

E

J. CROOK.

TO
F R I E N D S
I N

BEDFORDSHIRE, HERTFORDSHIRE,
AND THEREAWAYS:

Mercy and Peace rest among you.

DEAR FRIENDS AND BRETHREN,

MANY and long have been the days of your sorrow and mourning, and great also have been the deliverances and salvations which you have known: what people have been saved by the Lord, like unto you? And who have been carried as upon eagles wings, as you have been? Who in storms, have known him making a calm; and in a tempest, have known him rebuking the winds? And when no rock could be seen, because of the swelling of the mighty waters, but through the dashing of the waves, the rock hath been covered over with water, and yet in a little time the rock hath appeared again, as unmoveable and fixed; whereby you have learned both how to want, and how to abound; and to be full, and to suffer hunger. Keep fast the word of his patience, and let none take away your crown, but hold fast what you have received, which hath already made you to differ, not only from what you were in times past, but also from your familiars and acquaintance, who account it strange to see what you are, considering what you once were. And now the day

day is come and coming, wherein the difference must yet more appear, between those that fear the Lord, and those that fear him not; and the difference between those that say they are Jews, and are not, though they may have the praise of men: but the true Jew shall be now known from the formalist and time-server, and the upright-hearted from those that were never true in any form or profession. For it is the truth in the inward parts which many have talked of, but few have kept unto; such vain talkers shall now be known from the pure innocent seed, which now can lift up their heads, and not change their countenance, but are single to God. Come life, come death, liberty or bonds, their royalty now appears; for they are not of the earth, and therefore cannot sell their birth-right for vanity, nor their inheritance for that which is changeable: but however, the God, whom this royal seed serveth, deals with them, either to kill or save alive; yet they will not bow, but must be faithful in all things, knowing in whom they have believed. And though none may be tempted like unto these, nor none seemingly so desolate as they, yet they will trust in the hope, against the hope, and believe for the inheritance beyond all; because of a secret dependency upon, and a near alliance unto, the God of the whole earth, whose children they are: and their father they dare not forsake, whatsoever becomes of them, for he never did nor will forsake them; and their care is, that he may not be against them, whatever becomes of them. O you begotten of the Lord! lift up your heads, and know, in the word of the Lord, that whatsoever trials he exerciseth you withal, though it be to the offering up of all that is dear unto you, even as Isaac unto Abraham (your father); yet will he not fail, but provide himself a sacrifice, to save your

hope from perishing, and your faith from failing. Therefore be strong in the power of his might, and valiant for his name, unto the end; giving up all that is dear unto you, that the trial of your faith may appear to be more precious than silver, seven times tried in the fire, for the perfecting your joy, that it may be unspeakable, and full of glory; that through the steadfastness of your faith, you may not fail of deliverance, but by walking in Abraham's steps, you may come to Abraham's blessing; and your faith, as it was to Abraham, shall be imputed unto you for righteousness; and God will be your friend, and you shall walk with him, and he will not hide from you the things that he doth; but you shall know his secrets, when all the dreamers shall be starved as with their dreams, and the despisers shall wonder and perish; but your hope shall not make you ashamed.

Therefore, my dear Friends, as one that hath travailed with you and amongst you, I beseech you stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, and be not entangled again with any yoke of bondage; but give up all freely and wholly, and keep nothing back, but let the Lord of the whole earth be your possession, and the mighty God of Jacob your inheritance for ever. For certainly, great is the work our God hath in hand, and glorious shall be the issue of these things, unto all who stand faithful; but sorrow, horror, judgment, and wrath, unto all hypocrites and dissemblers, who are now running in the way of Esau, as before they were running in the way of Cain and Ishmael. But whither can they fly from God's presence? Or where can they hide from his hand? Surely he will arise in his fury, and his jealousy shall burn as an oven, against all that are chaff and stubble. And after he hath tried his seed, and made the excellency thereof

thereof appear, beyond all the vain talkers; and hath purged his floor, and cleansed his sanctuary; then will he renown his name for ever, and make Zion a praise, and Jerusalem the beauty of the whole earth.

And therefore now, my dear friends and brethren, keep your meetings, and be not at all affrighted, and take no notice of the boisterous winds; but be you still, and they will pass over; and know your dwellings, and abide there with God. And as any are moved, let none keep silence, or withhold from letting the breasts run, or the fountain flow; but build up one another in the holy faith, that God's presence, life, and power, may abide with you, and run through you; that you may be a watered garden, and as beds of spices, that the beloved may blow, and cause the scent thereof to ascend; that the Lord, your husband, may walk in you, and be with you for ever: and that the fearful and unbelieving may be seen to dwell without, and you to have no fellowship with them, but rather reprove them: that a pure lump you may be, and a holy temple; that nothing may be heard or seen amongst you, but what is becoming so high and holy a calling, as you are made partakers of; that purity may shine through you, and greenness and freshness may be your condition, and righteousness and holiness your whole course, at all times, to the praise of him who hath called you for ever. Amen.

My God and father keep you all, dear friends and brethren, in his arms of love and peace, and fill your meetings with his power and presence, that you may be a blessing one to another: and let peace and unity be amongst you; let every one keep their place in the body; and whereto you are called, abide faithful; and none strangle any moving of the life, but all in the innocence and simplicity

keep, which will make you bold and valiant for the truth of our God, in this day of storms, wherein all the blossom trees, that bear no fruit, shall be cursed, together with the dry and fruitless; for now shall they be blessed for ever, who stand faithful to the end. Keep your meetings, as at other times; and take no notice of any thing, but what is pure and holy: and so the God of peace keep you all, with all the faithful brethren and friends, in his love and peace to the end. Amen.

From Huntington gaol, the 28th
of the 11th month, 1660.

JOHN CROOK.

To all that are in outward Bonds, for the Testimony of a good Conscience, in Obedience to Christ's Command: I dearly salute you all, in the Bowels of Love and Mercy.

Dear Lambs and Brethren,

YOU are of them choice ones of your father, and of the only ones of your mother; her breasts are open to succour the crying babe, and she is ready to swaddle the infants as with bands, and to carry them in her arms: your mother is free, and you are of her first born; into bondage you may not go, for that will debase your birth, and degenerate the offspring from whence you had your being. Long hath been the days and time of your exilement, and sore hath been your grief, and cruel your bondage; who have been termed desolate and forsaken, as a widow of youth; as if none regarded you, or cared what became of you: but the Lord your God hath found you out, when you were as gold in the ore, and as the little stone unhewed out of the mountain, so have you been; and your dwellings have been as amongst the pots, and as in the clefts of the rock, and secrets of the stairs; but now is the Lord of hosts saying to Zion, Come forth; and to Jerusalem, Be thou strong; for the Lord thy Redeemer lives, and thy God, thy helper, will awake as a man of war, and come forth as a lion to the prey, and tear and devour at once all that have spoiled thee. Only be thou still, and commit thy way unto him, and he will bring to pass thy deliverance: for he hath chosen thee as an everlasting inheritance for himself, and as a possession for his

glory to shine through, and appear in. Thou art exceeding beautiful in his eye, and amiable unto his view, there is none like unto thee among all the daughters; for thou hast been regarded of the Lord thy husband, who in loving-kindness, faithfulness, and truth, is espousing thee unto himself for ever. Be not thou dismayed, nor say not thou, "I am too mean for him;" for my education hath been amongst the mean, and my breeding amongst the rude, and I have been brought up as amongst the mourners, and my descent hath been as contemptible, among the princes, so that I have been ready to say, What am I, or the womb that brought me forth, or my father's house, that I should be looked upon by the king in his beauty? Were there not many richer, and many nobler, and many fairer, and many better than I am? Who have not so often slighted his proffers, and denied his wooings, and refused his callings, and gainsaid his reproofs, as I have done; and who have not so often abused so many plain and undeniable deliverances, as I have done; and so many warnings, as I have had; and resolutions, as I have made; and promises and covenants in myself, as I have taken, between God and my own soul; and so many favours and mercies, as have been shewed unto me, and that from my youth up? who have been often overcome with the deep sense thereof, and melted and broken to pieces by the deep contemplations and meditations thereof, in my secret retirings, and inmost dwelling; but still, when I came to performance, I failed, and weakness was upon me; for that when I rose up, it was but to fall down; and when I went to go, I staggered and reeled to and fro, and there was no soundness in me, nor ability, to bring forth; but feebleness and faintness was my portion, and weakness my state, and sorrow my bread, and tears my drink, and sighing
and

and weeping my only rest and peace; so that all my relations, and outward enjoyments, were but gall to my taste, and wormwood to my palate." And much more might be said by thee, thou that hast been afflicted and tossed with tempest, and not comforted: lift up thy head, for the days of thy mourning shall be over, and thy winter shall be past; and for mourning and heaviness, shalt thou have the oil of gladness poured upon thee; and for sackcloth and ashes, shalt thou be clothed with beautiful garments: for the king, the Lord of Hosts, hath seen thee, when thou wert as under the sycamore tree, and sat alone as a sparrow upon the house top, and wast sorrowful and solitary, as the owl in the desert, and was hunted as the partridge upon the mountains, and like the dove couldst find no place whereon to set thy foot. O thou beloved one! an ark hath the Lord, thy husband, provided for thee, to secure thy soul from all the floods of the ungodly, and overwhelmings of the wicked one; and now shall thy rock appear, which is not like the nations rock, but is founded sure in the midst of the sea, and shall not, nor cannot be moved. Be thou still and quiet, and the winds and the sea shall be hushed by him who is thy husband, only keep thou in thy chastity, and let nothing defile his bed; let no thoughts lodge within thee, that may give him distaste; nor no words proceed from thee, which may incur his displeasure; for he is very jealous, and therefore take heed of provoking him: be thou subject unto him in all things, and he will clothe thee as with costly attire, and put his jewels about thy neck, and his bracelets about thy wrists, and will put his own comeliness upon thee, and his love in thy heart, and his truth in thy inward parts, and he will sanctify thee throughout, in body, soul, and spirit, and make thee honourable in the sight of all thy

thy enemies, and he will enrich thee with his heavenly treasures, which are hid in him. Love nothing more than him, but let him be thy whole delight; and account it thy glory, and thy praise, that thou hast any thing to lose, or part withal, for his sake. Account his chains as thy ornaments, and his bonds as thy beauty, and his prison as thy palace; and all the thoughts and reasonings of thy heart to be as a mighty host, that comes to beleaguer thy dwelling, and to lay siege to thy tabernacle: therefore stand upon your guards, ye beloved ones, and let not your watch be neglected, nor your armour put off, or laid aside; let no part be naked, especially look to your shield; for the enemies you have to encounter with, are mighty in skill, and they aim as at the vital parts; and see you keep your order in the body, so that no breach may be made amongst you, nor any seek for any place, but where he may most serve the Lord, and preserve the peace of the camp; so shall your general, the Lord of Hosts, be renowned, and his fame sound to the ends of the earth: for never were any people engaged in a more noble enterprize, than this you are undertaking; for it is not for an earthly crown, nor for a worldly sanctuary, that you strive, but for a kingdom that shall have no end, and for a crown which fades not away. Stand your ground therefore, yield not a foot; for your captain is as the strength of an unicorn, and his stoutness as the fierceness of a lion; much lies at stake, and many mighty men are engaged against you, the dragon, with all his followers, and the other beasts of the field, that are mighty to devour, with the whore in her robes, and Jezabel with her paint, and the false prophet, as one on horseback, newly recruited and prepared for war, with all his attendants, who are many in number, and greedy for the prey. Therefore be wise as serpents,

pents, innocent as doves, and let your clothing be white, and your sword the Spirit of the Lord; spare not what is for the slaughter, nor grieve not any tender thing. Many are the eyes that are upon you, and great the expectations from you; therefore be strong and valiant, and quit yourselves like men; so that the upright may rejoice in your integrity, and the cowardly may be provoked to jealousy, because of your constancy, and the enemies affrighted, because of your courage: for you are of the royal seed, that must not bow; and the noble plant, that cannot be plucked up; and garden, wherein grow the spices; and the meadows, as by the river side, and as the streams of a pebbled brook, that runs pleasantly along the vales, and waters the tender herbs, and causes the lilies to grow. Let nothing stop your current, nor muddy your water, but keep clear and pure, and stand always open, to be filled and supplied from the fountain; for great is that love that is towards you, beyond all the daughters; and those hopes, upon which you are fastened, must not prove abortive. You know who hath carried you as upon eagles wings, and led you as through the craggy rocks, and borne you up when you have been ready to faint, and brought you up out of the wilderness, as leaning upon his breast, who spake to you in the land of drought, and made the parched ground become a place of springs; who swaddled you, when your navel was not cut; and taught you to go, when feebleness possessed your loins; and your stammering tongues to speak plainly, and your hands to war, and your fingers to fight; who preserved you, when you were very small; and helped you, when you were environed on every side: be strong in his might, for he still will be your rear-ward, as he hath been your leader; and therefore so far as you are come
into

into the holy land, bless his name, and let all within you magnify his holiness for ever; for with you he is, and from you he will not depart, until he hath made you the praise of the whole earth. Be strong in his might, and wait to behold his wonders, as in times past, and to see his salvation, and the mountain of his holiness, to be set on the top of all the hills: for Zion shall become the beauty of the whole earth, and as a praise among many people; whenas the treacherous dealers shall be dealt treacherously withal, and the false children, who deny their father, and the breasts that gave them suck, shall be cast out amongst the fearful and unbelievers; and when the mighty shall become as tow, and the princes as vanity, and the prophets as liars, and the diviners as mad, and the burthened couch like the ass, and the washed to the mire like the sow, and the dog to the licking up his vomit again; and when the filthy shall be filthy still; and the pure and holy, shall be holy still. And this division and separation shall he make, who is come and coming to his temple, to purge and refine away all their dross, and tin, and chaff; and to give them, instead thereof, gold, and silver, and pearls, with all the choice treasure of the holy land; but when he doth this, shall he find faith upon the earth? When he thus purifies, who shall abide his coming? besides, you who have come through the fire, hardly, by stealth, as the remnant that are escaped of Israel, who in the name of your God, and by his help, have leaped over a wall, and arrived at a safe haven, and dwell as in the land of safety, where your habitation shall be as in the munition of rocks, and your gates shall be praise, and your walls salvation, and your songs new and pleasant, not learnable by any, but those who are redeemed from the earth, and out of the kindreds, nations, tongues, and people, who
have

have none in heaven but the Lord, nor in the earth in comparison of him. You are my brethren, and children that cannot lie, born of the same womb of all the nobles of Israel; you may not disparage your descent, nor undervalue the race from whence you sprang; for you are become companions with all who are born from above, who walk with God, and have fellowship with Christ through the Spirit, with all the royal race amongst the living. Let nothing bow you down, nor debase your birth; but be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: and the God of glory feed you every morning, and strengthen you at all times; is the prayer of him, who is your companion in tribulation, and fellow-sufferer for the kingdom and patience of Jesus. Amen.

From Huntington gaol, the 24th
of the 11th Month, 1660.

J. CROOK.

T H E

CASE OF SWEARING AT ALL DISCUSSED.

MAN was planted a noble vine, wholly a right seed, but he is turned into the degenerated plant of a strange vine, more degenerate than the ox or the ass; he is fallen from the uprightness, sincerity, and simplicity, into the invention, subtilty, and fleshly wisdom; where he lies grovelling upon the earth, thinking, by the multitude of his inventions, to recover himself, and to come to life again: but he is fenced out with a flaming sword, so that to life he cannot come, but through death, which he seeks to avoid, by following the counsel of the evil one, who says, in this, as he did formerly to the woman, "Thou shalt not surely die;" though God had said, as it is written, "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die:" and also that which the apostle feared might come upon some of the Corinthians, is come upon all the world, viz. the serpent, that beguiled Eve, hath beguiled men and women in this age, through his subtilty, by corrupting their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ; and as the deceiver then denied what God had spoken, and not only so, but also put his own meaning and exposition upon God's command, that so he might accomplish his end; for said the perverter then, "God doth know that in the day thou eatest thereof,

“ of, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be
 “ as gods, knowing good and evil.” And hath
 not the same serpent beguiled the people of this
 age, from the naked simplicity, to hearken to the
 disguised subtilty and fleshly wisdom? Not only
 to deny that Christ hath given out an absolute com-
 mand, that his followers should not swear at all,
 by any oath; but also as he did then, so he hath
 done since, and doth do now in this age, put his
 exposition and meaning to Christ’s commands, in
 saying in some men, that it is not all swearing that
 is forbidden, but swearing in mens ordinary com-
 munication: this exposition, the subtilty in some
 men puts upon Christ’s command; whereupon they
 conclude, that notwithstanding Christ’s command,
 not to swear at all, yet when any man is called be-
 fore a magistrate, if the magistrate require it, he
 ought to swear, &c.

To which it is said, Christ’s own words in verse
 33, 34, of the fifth of Matthew, answers this ob-
 jection in these words, “ Again it hath been said in
 “ old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself; but
 “ shalt perform to the Lord thy oaths: but I say
 “ unto you, Swear not at all,” &c. (Mark) “ Thou
 “ shalt not forswear thyself,” &c. The law, in
 old time, did not allow of swearing in their ordinary
 communication and dealing, for that was taking
 God’s name in vain, Exodus xx. 7. which was
 forbidden from the beginning; but in that case
 wherein they were allowed to swear, they were not
 to forswear themselves: but Christ Jesus the Son,
 by whom the Father speaks in these last times,
 “ Who is the end of the law for righteousness, to
 “ all that believe in him,” who is the truth and
 substance of all, says, “ Swear not at all.” (Mark)
 the truth says, “ Swear not at all; for whatsoever
 “ is more than Yea and Nay, comes of evil.”

Now

Now if Christ, the Truth, had spoke no more in these words, "Swear not at all," &c. than to forbid profane swearing, as they call it, or not swearing in men's ordinary communication, what doth he forbid more than was forbidden in old time? Seeing, as before is proved, that all profane swearing, which is a taking of God's name in vain, or swearing in ordinary communication or dealing, was forbidden from the beginning. And again, how doth this hold parallel with the rest of Christ's sayings and comparisons, viz. What was said in the old time by the law, and is now said by himself, who is the sum and end of the law for righteousness? &c. And whether they, who thus reason, do not, by their traditions, make Christ's command of none effect? And do not all those that plead, that the saints ought and may swear, when they are called to it by a magistrate, not only break Christ's commands themselves, but teach others so to do? Whose portion may be read in Matt. v. 19. And by their thus reasoning in their dark minds, make Christ to speak nothing further, nor fuller, than was spoken in old time; though in old time it was said, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thy oath," &c. But saith Christ, "I say unto you, Swear not at all." Now, let all judge, who are not blinded, through gain or tradition, whether those that say, the saints ought to swear (when called to it, as aforesaid) do not wholly make void these words, viz. "Whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil." And so they being in the evil, are blinded, and hate the light, that would let them see; and speak evil of it, because it would reprove them; and being in darkness, they know not whither they go; but as saith the prophet, Isaiah v. 20. call darkness light, and light darkness; and good evil, and evil good. And it

it is farther manifest, to all that have an eye to see, that Christ, the Substance and the Truth, intended as he spake, when he said, " Swear not at all ;" which was to forbid all manner of swearing, without exception ; because when Christ intended an exception at verse 32, he expressed it in these words, " But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of adultery ; (mark) " saving for the cause of adultery : " where Christ plainly expresseth the exception. But for proud men to make exceptions, where Christ hath made none, is to set self on the throne. And again, at verse 28, the exception is expressed, viz. " Who- soever shall look upon a woman, and lust after her ; (mark) to lust after her ; " and is not left to vain man to put his meaning to it.

It is farther objected by some, That by those of old time, is meant, the expositors of the law, who said, if men swear truth, that was not evil ; but only they were not to swear to that which was false, &c.

To which it is answered, That this being an invention of the objector, and no where so said in the Scripture of truth, it needs no other answer, than a denial ; but the word in the Greek reads it thus, " It was said to them of old time ; " thereby implying, those to whom, and by whom, God spake, &c. *rois anciens antiques.*

But it is strongly objected, That the apostle, in the epistle to the Hebrews, allows of swearing before a magistrate ; as in Heb. vi. 16. in these words, For men verily swear by the greater ; and an oath for confirmation, is to them an end of all strife, &c.

To which is replied, There the apostle, by a similitude, makes it out to the Hebrews, how that God swore by himself, because he could not swear by a greater, to confirm the promise, That by two

immutable things, by which it was not possible for God to lie, they might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them; and God being more abundantly willing to shew to the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; which thing was used among men that lived in strife, to put an end to strife; they used an oath, and they sware by the greater; an oath for confirmation, was to them an end of all strife; and because God could not swear by a greater, he sware by himself: and by the oath of God is the promise confirmed to the righteous seed, that they might have strong consolation; no more to suffer strife, and fears, and doubts, to enter upon them; but that they all might witness in themselves an end put to all strife and contention, &c. as truly and really in the inward man, by Christ Jesus, God's oath and covenant, as an outward oath used among men, that live in strife, was to them, for confirmation, the end of all strife: and in this case, under the law was an oath required, *Exod. xxii. 20.* "If a man
 " deliver unto his neighbour an ox, or an ass, or a
 " sheep, or any beast to keep, and it die, or be
 " hurt, or driven away, no man seeing it; then
 " shall an oath of the Lord be between them both,
 " that he hath not put his hand to his neighbour's
 " goods, and the owner of it shall accept thereof,
 " and he shall not make it good;" (mark) the owner of the goods was to accept thereof, and he shall not make it good: so an oath for confirmation was an end to the controversy; and in this old time, under the law, they were not to forswear themselves; but Christ says, "Swear not at all," who is "the end of the law for righteousness," &c. Now the apostle never intended, by that which was used in old time, and among men that lived in strife,
 (all

(all which he brings in as a comparison and similitude to confirm the promise, &c. and not) to encourage men to break Christ's commands, who says, "Swear not at all;" nor to give any sort of men encouragement to walk contrary to the apostle's doctrine, who said, "Above all things, my brethren, swear not," &c. Neither that they should take encouragement from his comparison, to live in strife, because men, that used swearing at all, did so; neither did the apostle any more intend to lay a foundation for swearing, or for men to impose oaths upon others, by his similitude of what was used among strifeful men, that he intended that the ministers of Christ should bring a Heathen poet to prove their doctrine, because he says, Acts xvii. 28. "As certain also of your own poets have said," &c. And may it not be as justly concluded, that parents should take encouragement to correct their children after their own pleasure, because he says, Heb. xii. 9, 10. "We have had fathers of our flesh, who for a few days chastised us after their own pleasures," &c.? And as honestly it may be concluded, that the apostle intended that men should either swear themselves at all, or compel others so to do, from these words, viz. "For verily men swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." And farther, is there any more ground given by the apostle for the saints to swear at all, by any oath, from the words before mentioned, than there is ground from Christ's words to the saints, to "exercise lordship one over another," because he says, Mark x. 42. "The Gentiles do so?" Besides, did not those that used swearing, use it only in those cases, where an oath would put an end to all strifes? But is not oaths imposed, at this day, where no strife is? Nay, are they not imposed for the beginning of strife? Let

the righteous judge how far those, that would be accounted saints, are fallen, that they are short in their practices of those men that lived in strife in ages past.

Again, to impose oaths upon others, from the apostle's words, is to make the apostle a transgressor; for he says, Gal. ii. 18. "If I build again the things that I have destroyed, am I not a transgressor?" Now he condemned some among the Corinthians, for walking as men, 1 Cor. iii. 3. "For ye are yet carnal; whereas there is envying among you, division and strife, are you not carnal, and walk as men?" (mark) there was strife and division among them, and from that he proves them carnal, and therefore they walk as men, which the apostle condemns: whereas they should walk as become saints, who are redeemed from among men, Rev. xiv. 14. out of envy, strife, and division; and are called unto love, righteousness, and peace; which all, who walk as become saints, witness.

Object. That an oath cannot be bad, because even God himself did often use swearing in scripture, &c.

Ans. That it may become God alone to swear, because he alone is true, and cannot lie; but all men are liars, as says the apostle. "And the Lord hath sworn, and will not repent," Psalm cx. 4. Let him then swear, that cannot repent of his oath; and he is not to be imitated in swearing by that man, who cannot imitate him in fulfilling.

It is again objected by some, That all proceedings at law depends upon swearing; therefore they conclude, that all men must swear, &c.

Ans. That the foundation of the law of England, and the present practice and proceedings thereupon, do not agree; as may appear by these instances following, viz. One main and principal foundation of

of the law of England, is the law of God; so says the law book, Doctor and Student, chap. ii. p. 4. in these words, ' There is a law written in the heart of man, which is man created in the image of God; and this law is always good and righteous, stirring up the man to do the good, and abhor the evil; and therefore against this law,' says the book, ' Prescription, statute, custom, may not prevail; and if any be brought in against it, they be void, and against justice.' Now consider, according to your law, how few proceedings are according to justice, and instead of being made void, as being against justice, they are encouraged, and hath been.

Again, it is in the law of England, 9 Hen. 3. 29. That right and justice should neither be sold, deferred, nor denied to any man, &c. But let those that have to do at courts, speak and bear witness, whether both denying and delaying, both of law and right, be not that which they meet withal; and for felling and buying of it, let the great and excessive fees which some lawyers take for pleading, speak, who are in repute; and as the people say, If you can but retain such a man, you need not fear your cause, &c.

Again, it is the law of England, That none should be put into office upon suit, or for favour or affection, but upon desert, 12 Rich. 22. 5 Edw. 6. 16. The first part of Coke's Institutes, p. 2. 34. A law, says Coke, worthy to be written in letters of gold. But how contrary to these statutes the present practices are, let the righteous judge.

Further, both by the common law, and statute law, the judges were not to hear the plaintiff's cause, if he first put not in security to answer his adversary's damages, if he complained of him wrongfully, Mirror, p. 64. 37 Edw. 3. 18. 38 Edw. 3. 9. And he that chargeth a man with any accusation, ought

to put in security to make good his accusation; and the law hath provided a punishment for him, that makes not his accusation good: but how contrary the present practices and proceedings of courts are at this day, let the causes that come into them speak: do not they issue out their writs, grounded upon divers plain and notorious lies? As that they have sent to the sheriff of Middlesex (which they have not done) and that he hath returned, that the party is not within his liberty (which he hath not done) but lies lurking in another county, which is most commonly false, the man going up and down as at other times, and the sheriff of Middlesex knowing nothing of it. Again, they say, they have taken pledges to prosecute, viz. John Doe, and Richard Roe, which is also a deceit, and a lie, those being common feigned names put into all writs, and these writs made up of so many lies, being framed by any clerk, and given forth in the chief magistrate's name, is born witness to by the chief justice of England, is the ground and foundation of all proceedings at law; where, by the known law of England, in cases of debt, men ought to be first summoned to appear to answer the plaintiff before they be arrested; but how contrary the present proceedings are, let all sober men judge.

Again, the law says, Mirror, p. 2. 49. 'It is an abuse of the common law, to appear or answer by an attorney:' but the present practice is quite contrary; for they have, and do deny, to accept of a man's appearance in person, although the words of their own writs are so, in these words, 'so that we may have his body before us at our court at Westminster, such a day,' &c. And it is further evidenced, that the appearing by an attorney was first in favour, and in ease of the subject, that so they might depute one for their ease; as in the
book

book *De Attornati Faciendo*; but now so is justice and judgment turned backward, that that which was for the ease of the people, is now made use of, to maintain a trade of deceit. It is written in Coke's Reports, in Richard Godfrey's case, that *Excessus in re qualibet, jure reprobatu communis*; as excessive distresses, excessive aids, excessive amercedments, are against the common law. And how contrary to the present practices is, let the proceedings against the innocent people (called Quakers) bear witness in divers counties in England, who have been fined more than they have been worth; some, it may be, for not swearing, and others for not respecting of men's persons: but precedents enough may be seen of their cruel oppressions in this kind, in a book in print, called, *The Record of the Sufferings for Tithes*; and in most prisons in England, examples of excessive cruelty may be found exercised upon poor innocent people, because they cannot submit to pay these excessive fines imposed on them, contrary to any known law, and the practices of ages past; but such men fly to custom, when no known law can be found, and abuse the word custom, as many justices do, and have done, the word discretion; neither of them warranting the practices of proud self-willed men, there being customs that are evil, which ought to be abolished, as says the law; and Coke, in his Reports in Gateward's cause, says, custom ought to be reasonable, *Et exercita causa rationabili usitata*; as Littleton says: and the word discretion, is also much abused by corrupt men, they making it a cloak to cover their deceitful actings, when they have no law to warrant their practices: 'But discretion,' as Coke says, 'is a knowledge or understanding to discern betwixt truth and falsehood, and between right and wrong, between shadows and substance, and be-

between equity and colourable glosses and pretences; and not to do according to our wills and private affections:’ for, says he, ‘*Talis discretio, discessionem confundit*’; and hath been adjudged in the case of commission of suers, discretion is to be bounded with reason, law, and justice;’ and so the word custom is abused, and urged by corrupt men, in opposition to the expresse command of Christ, who says, “Swear not at all.”

By these examples the honest hearted may see, how contrary the present practices of the law is, to the foundation of the law; and so that which is good, being used lawfully, is become a dead thing, execution being the life of the law; and hereby the righteous, that it is not made for, is most hurt by it; and the flatterer and evil-doer encouraged; therefore their reasoning is not good, who say, All men ought to swear, because of long time they have used to do so, and continue still to do so: therefore the question is not, what men do practise, but what men ought to practise, according to a true rule and line. For we read not, that I remember, among all Israel’s laws, that any of their officers were made by an oath, as judges, rulers, kings, or priests, or prophets, or required to swear, before they took the work or office upon them: but we read, Deut. xix. 15. “At the mouth of two, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.” (Mark) the matter was to be established without swearing: for if they should have been first sworn, it would have been so written, it being a command to Israel; and in the case of life and death, At the mouth of two or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. In this case of life and death, no oath was used that we read of, Deut. xvii. 6. And if
any

any false witness did arise, he, and the party he witnessed against, was to stand before the Lord, and before the priest, and judges, which should be in those days, and the judges were to make diligent inquisition, " And if the witness be a false witness, " and have testified falsely against his brother, then " shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have " done unto his brother; so shall you put away " the evil from among you," Deut. xix. 16, 17, 18. But no swearing is mentioned; and if any matter did arise too hard for them in judgment between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and stroke and stroke, being matters of controversy within their gate, they were not to swear men to find it out, neither were they to act presumptuously in their own passions and wills, and then cover it, with saying, they were judges of the law, and they judged it so, and many things being left to discretion: and therefore says wilful men, in the stoutness of their hearts, ' If we do what we cannot answer, take your course against us: ' and thus presumptuously do they act their own wills upon the innocent; but Israel was not to do so; but in cases too hard for them in judgment, they were to arise and go up to the place which the Lord God should choose, and they were to come to the priest and Levite, and unto the judges which should be in those days, and inquire, and they were to shew the sentence of judgment; and they were to do according to the sentence which they of the place which the Lord should choose, should shew therein; " And " thou shalt observe to do according to all that " they shall inform thee," &c. " And the man " that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken " to the priests that stand up there, to minister before the Lord thy God, or unto the judges, even " that man shall die, and thou shalt put away the " evil

"evil from Israel," Deut. xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. This was God's law to Israel, that the presumptuous that would not wait upon the Lord, to receive a law where there was none, should be put to death.

Was it an offence of old, to act presumptuously? And is it not now a crime worthy to be taken notice of by the chief in power in these days? Or are there none that have done presumptuously, in casting innocent people into prison, when they have done no offence, nor broken any known law? Except it becomes an offence to wait upon the Lord, and to pray unto him, for which cause, and none other, the innocent have been cast into prison by the presumptuous and self-willed men, who, when they had no law, have acted in their will, contrary to law: let such remember, that by God's law, they that would not wait upon the Lord for a law, but would act presumptuously without a law, were to be put to death.

Object. That by not swearing at all, we are to understand by any creature, and not by God the Creator; for they were commanded to swear by God, Thou shalt swear by the Lord; as in Deut. x. &c.

Answ. That according to Christ's own words, Swear not at all, without any exception, as before hath been proved, and is expounded in the large bible in quarto, in the margin, on Matt. v. 37. in these words, "Whatsoever ye vouch, vouch it barely; and whatsoever ye deny, deny it barely, without any more words; for whatsoever is more than these, comes of the Devil:" and also in the same book it is said, on James v. 12. "That what you have to say or affirm, speak or affirm it simply, and without any oath; and that, that you will deny, deny it simply and flatly." And again, this objection is more fully answered in
Matt,

Matt. xxiii. 21, 23. " Whosoever swears by the temple, swears by it, and by him that dwells therein; and whosoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God, and him that sits thereon:" so that he that swears by the creature, shall not be exempted by the Creator from profaning his name, for now it is said, Swear not at all.

Again, it is objected by the former objectors, who say all proceedings at law depend upon swearing, That if we should take every man's word, when they are called to give their testimony, in all cases, it might be of dangerous consequence, both to men's lives, liberties, and estates, &c.

To which it is answered, That if the same law, or a stricter, were made against lying, and bearing false witness, in all cases, as against men's swearing, false swearing, or forswearing themselves; and that law truly and constantly executed, without respect of persons, it would then be of no more danger to believe a man's Yea or Nay, to the questions that are asked him by the magistrate, whatever they be, than if he had kissed the book, or used any other posture with the hand, or spoken never so many words, his affirming or denying to the case in question, being his testimony, I say, the truth of these mens testimonies may as easily, plainly, and fully be discerned, and punished according to the law in that case provided, if it be false, as if they had used never so many words or postures, as aforesaid; and therefore men's lives, liberties, and estates, may every way be as well secured by a law provided to punish lying, and bearing false witness, as by any law that is made, or can be made, to punish swearing, or false swearing, so called. Again, as to the present state of things, because there is no law in being, as some say, to punish lying, therefore we must swear, &c.

What

What law is there to force men to swear, or to punish those that swear falsely, or against their knowledge, to their answers to bills in Chancery and Exchequer? And is it not common and ordinary for men to do so? If there be a law, why is it not put in execution? Or doth custom make swearing falsely, and against a man's knowledge, no offence; and a man's speaking truly, without swearing, an offence punishable with imprisonment? Who hath given this authority to custom? Let equity answer. But of this more may be spoken afterward, in its place.

Object. That an oath is a solemn thing, and that when people are called before a magistrate to swear, there is an awe upon them; and therefore those that are wicked, and liars, &c. are afraid to forswear themselves, when called before a magistrate.

This objection is somewhat answered in the precedent objection: but farther it is answered, That the fear upon people, when they come to swear, is either the fear of God, which is good; or some other fear, which is evil; as the fear of man only, and his punishment: this last fear, is not be feared by those that fear the Lord; "Fear ye not their
" fear, but fear him that can destroy both soul and
" body;" and this fear is pure, and keeps the heart clean, whereby God is seen, and deceit and guile is kept out, and truth is spoken in all cases: and he that abides in the "Fear of the Lord, stands in
" awe, and sins not," and is kept not only from swearing, but lying also; but he that only fears man, and his punishment, when he comes to know and understand that there is as great, or greater, punishment to be inflicted upon him for his lying, or for his false swearing, or forswearing himself, or bearing false witness, then he also will stand in as much fear of a lie as of an oath, or that which is called

called so. Besides, it is commonly seen by experience, that those who care not what they speak, matter not much what they swear, if so be they can but keep from the punishment of the law : but it is not so with the righteous, for the fear of the Lord makes them sober and solid, and their words to be few and favourable, seasoned with truth: but those that fear man, and his displeasure and punishment only, when they know the same law to be in force against lying, as against swearing, or swearing falsely, they will then be as solemn, and as afraid to lie, as now to forswear themselves.

It is objected by others, who say, the scripture is their rule, That the holy men in old time did swear, as we may read under the law, as Abraham swore, and David, and Solomon.

To all which it is said, Christ is the end of the law; and he who is the oath of God, by whom God speaks in these last days, says, Swear not at all: and he that is greater than Solomon, whose day Abraham saw, but he himself is now come, and says, Swear not at all; and he, who is David's Lord, says, Swear not at all; who is the end of the prophets, the everlasting high priest and covenant of God, the sum and substance of all the things the law was but a shadow of, who is the truth, the life, and the way to the Father, and teaches all his followers to speak truth to their neighbour, and to walk in the truth, which makes free from swearing at all, notwithstanding the traditions of their fathers in the flesh, or the practices of strifeful men; for by Christ, the Truth, they are taught to speak truth, and not to fear them, that can but kill the body, but to fear him that can cast both soul and body into hell; which fear he hath placed in their hearts, that they might not depart from him, but abide in his doctrine, which says, Swear not at all.

It

It is farther objected by some, That the angel swear in the revelations, and that Paul swear, as may be read in his epistles, in saying, I protest before God; and in often saying, I call the Lord God to witness; which is said to be an oath, &c.

To the first, that the angel swear, it is said, Let all the angels worship him, who hath said, Swear not at all. And to that, that Paul protested before God; it is the intrusion of the translator, it being neither in the Greek copies, nor Latin, nor some English copies.

To the second, that he calls God to witness; that is no oath, but only an earnest attestation; an oath being that whereby something is sworn by, as Israel was to swear by the name of the Lord. And calling God to witness, or saying, God is my witness, is no more than to say, I speak in God's presence, or before him who knows the hearts and thoughts of all men; and is no formal oath, as it is called, or commonly used, in opposition to a plain and earnest expression of a man's mind.

Again, it is objected, That not to swear at all, is only evangelical counsel, and not an absolute prohibition of all swearing, in all cases, though it be said, Swear not at all; so it is said, Thou shalt not kill; and yet in some cases it is lawful to kill.

Ans. That forbidding to Swear at all, is no where in Scripture called evangelical counsel; but such an absolute and positive command, and backed with the apostle's doctrine, that I know not any command fuller in the Scripture of Truth. And whereas it is said, That to kill, is a prohibition, and yet in some cases allowable; yet it is no where so said of swearing, in the New Testament, or, since the time of its prohibition, that it is lawful in any case to swear; neither was it practised in the first ages of the true church, as may appear hereafter in its proper

proper place, under the head of precedents of them who denied swearing: and though it be lawful in some cases to kill, though it be said, Thou shalt not kill, yet it is no where said, It is lawful to swear in any case, as afore said; but on the contrary, Wo be unto them that brings a Christian to such a necessity, that he must swear; as wo attends them that necessitates a Christian to kill.

Now follow several Precedents, or Examples, out of Ancient Authors, of the best Repute among them that are called Learned.

In the New Testament, by Christ, the great Prophet and High Priest of our profession, swearing is so fully and absolutely forbidden, and bound up with this word, Not at all, that nothing is plainer either in the Old or New Testament; and this continued in, and preached by his apostles, particularly by James, who gives this the pre-eminence in a peculiar manner, above all other things, that those whom he wrote to should be careful to keep and observe, saying, "Above all things, my brethren, Swear not; neither by heaven or earth, nor any other oath;" which is an absolute negative exclusion of all swearing, in all cases. And Eusebius, an ancient writer, of no mean esteem among the learned, writes in his sixth book, chap. 4. p. 98. about the year 200, that Basilides, a soldier, unto whom the virgin Potamioena was committed, as one appointed for martyrdom: but not long after, the same Basilides, being required by his fellow-soldiers to swear, upon some occasion that fell out, affirmed plainly, it was not lawful for him to swear, for he said he was a Christian, and that he would in very deed protest the same; who afterward was beheaded

as a martyr. And of the Waldenses, of whom the first book of Martyrs makes much mention, and are said by some immediately to succeed the apostles, and were dispersed into most parts of the world, and to be the most ancient and true Protestants, as may be seen by what Fox records of them in the Book of Martyrs, and this they maintained among other things, That all manner of swearing was unlawful; as may appear by Parsons, Sanders, Coccius, and others; and by Bishop Usher, a late writer, and a man reputed for learning, who hath by way of apology for the Waldenses, in this case of swearing, seemed to justify them therein; as in his book *De Succes.* cap. 6. And the said Usher farther says, in his eighth chapter, quoting some ancient authors, That the Waldenses, as well as Anabaptists of late, did profess it to be no ways lawful for a Christian to swear, upon any occasion. And Theophilate, upon Matt. v. 37, says, ' That though in the time
' of the old law it was not evil to swear, but since
' the coming of Christ it is an evil, as is circum-
' cision; and in sum, whatever is judicial; for it
' may become a child to suck, but not a man.'

And farther in the Book of Martyrs, vol. 1. p. 701, it is charged against William Thorp, in his sermon, that he preached at Shrewsbury, ' That it
' is not lawful to swear in any case:' to which he answered, ' He denied to swear by a book, as being made up of creatures;' and quotes Chrysostom in these words: ' Who blamed them greatly, who
' brought forth books to swear, whether they think
' a man do swear true or false,' &c.

The archbishop and his clerks scorned this saying of Thorp, and that bishop menaced him with great punishment, except he left this opinion of swearing. To which Thorp answered, ' It was not
' his opinion, but the opinion of Christ, and of
Saint

Saint James, and of Chrysoftom, and of other divers faints and doctors. The archbishop caused to be read this homily of Chrysoftom, which the clerk did accordingly, until he came to a clause, where Chrysoftom says, ' That it is sin to swear well,' &c. And again, in Fox, vol. i. p. 527, in the plowman's prayer, in these words, ' Thou gavest us a commandment in truth, in bidding us say Yea, Yea, Nay, Nay, and swear for nothing : thou gavest us also a commandment of meekness, and another of poorness ; but, Lord, he that cleepeth himself thy vicar on earth, hath broken both these commandments ; for he makes a law to compel men to swear, and by his law he teacheth, that a man to save his life, may forswear and lie ; and so, Lord, through comfort of him, and his law, the people ne dreadeth not to swear, and to liven ought time to forswear them : Lord, here is little truth,' &c. Again, William Swinderby, an article charged against him, ' That no man owes to swear for any thing, but simply without an oath, to affirm or deny ; and if he swears, he sins.'

And those that are conversant in our law, what was the practice in ancient time, where they testify, that oaths anciently given were not called imprecations, but attestations. And by the statute law, an act of parliament made 28 Hen. 8. 7. in these words, it is said, ' No man, of what estate, degree, or condition soever he be, hath power to dispense with God's law, as all the clergy of this realm in the said convocation, and most part of all the universities of Christendom ; and we also do affirm and think,' &c. Which makes void all laws, and practices and customs, that are contrary to Christ's law, and the apostle's doctrine, which says, " Swear not at all ;" and, " above all things, my brethren, swear not ; neither by heaven, nor earth,

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" nor

"nor any other oath," &c. And to conclude to this head, a lively emblem we have this day practised in England, where it is practised, that those who are called noblemen of England, are not put to their oaths, as it is said, in any case, but only their testimony is taken upon their words, affirming or denying upon their honours: and is there nothing left among Christians in these our days, or the people of the Lord, that is as dear unto them, as an earthly great man's repute and honour in the world is unto him? Blush for shame! and let it not be told in Gath, nor published in Askelon, that Christianity is grown out of repute, or that a true Christian may not be believed, when he speaks in the presence and fear of the Lord; although at the same time, and in the same case, he shall be believed that testifies only upon his earthly honour. And to this, court martial may not be an unfit precedent, who proceeds both to the trial and condemnation of persons, without an oath, taken by those that sit as judges, and that upon this ground also, because a soldier is supposed to be so tender of his honour, that he will not impeach it by injuring another, or advantaging himself. So let all these things be put together, and what can be more clear, than that oaths, or swearing men, since the coming of Christ, before either they can be capable of office, or serving their country, or their testimony be received in cases of difference before courts of judicature, is a popish institution, and hath no foundation or footing in the Scripture of Truth, nor in the practice of the primitive Christians; nor hath not been without a testimony against it, by some in all ages, even down to this day.

Now

Now follow the several inconveniences, that necessarily follow the imposition of oaths; which might be prevented, if swearing were not compelled.

Besides all that hath been said, do not these inconveniences and mischiefs necessarily follow the imposition of oaths, or determining things by swearing, &c.

Is not that which is called an oath, in many cases, once taken, untraversable? As for instance, one man having sworn against another positively, is not he that is sworn against, left without a remedy? And do not those, before whom the oath is taken, in some cases, take themselves concluded, and bound up by that oath, without any farther examining witnesses on the other side? Or at least, if witnesses be examined, of what force is their testimony, one or two men having sworn positively the contrary? Where often times the innocent are punished, and the guilty go free, and the author of evil undiscovered. May it not be queried, Whether the judge, before whom the oath is taken, as aforesaid, be clear of the blood of the innocent, in this case, although or because a law made in the will of man requires it, contrary to the law of Christ?

Again, is it not unequal and unjust, that all men, in some cases, should be punishable for swearing, though ignorantly and unawares; and yet no man, in other cases, to be punishable at all, though they swear against their own knowledge, and that wilfully too, and this to be ordinary and common; as in the answers to the bills in Chancery and Exchequer, which will not be received without an oath? And them that dare not swear, in obedience to Christ's command, have been and are imprisoned for contempt; so that he which departs from evil, makes

himself a prey; and the keeping of Christ's commands, are become a contempt: do not these things make the times perilous? Let the upright judge. When on the contrary, he that swears to his answer, though never so false, and against his knowledge, and that to his own benefit (sometimes) and prejudice of another; yet these men go unpunished for their evil; although they care not what they swear, provided they are not found out; and the other is punished by imprisonment, because they fear an oath, and yet dare not but speak the truth in their answers. So one man is punished, because he cannot swear at all, (though his answer be true) and another man goes free (though his answer be false) because he swears (although it be) to a lie, and that against his own knowledge; as many, who are now in prison for contempt, so called, which contempt is only because they cannot swear at all. So that in short, one man is punished when his answer is true, only because he dares not swear; another man escapeth, whenas his answer is false, because he dares swear to a lie, and the other dares not swear at all, as many prisons, bills, and answers in Chancery and Exchequer may witness. Again, if a man swear to an indictment, though never so false, yet it is commonly found upon that oath, whenas the man sworn against knows not of it: yet that man, which (it may be) both maliciously and knowingly, swears against his neighbour to his hurt (it is said) is not liable to be punished by the statute of perjury; which mischief might be prevented by witnesses without swearing. Farther, is not the way of determining of things by oath, not only injurious and unequal, but also attended with great and necessary inconveniences and evils, both to those that command swearing, and to those that do swear,

as to those that cannot swear at all for conscience sake.

To those that command swearing, who do not only break Christ's commands themselves, but command others so to do; but also, are they not guilty of the forswearing of others? Whenas they command men to take such oaths, as (before they give them) they themselves know it is impossible to keep and observe, and yet do compel the taking of them, or punish the neglect; as in the oaths of offices and officers, as sheriffs, bailiffs, constables, and others, besides the oaths of freemen of cities and corporations, &c. And in many other cases and employments, before entrance upon them, oaths are required to be taken, when in deed and in truth, both those that give them, and those that take them, know that little or nothing is intended to be done, or looked after, more than the title of honour, and profit and gain that come by them; though they swear to discharge their trust, and to do such and such things, which he that swears many times knows not what belongs to them, neither intends to trouble himself about them; as in several offices relating to the law, and courts of justice, and other places in the commonwealth. Again, is not swearing made use of as a seal to hypocrisy, both to him that commands it, and to him that obeys it? Because he that commands it, would not do it, but in order to his end; and the other would not take it, but for fear of a penalty, and because he cannot avoid it, he takes it, but in his own sense, and to his own end, and it may be quite contrary to the end of him that commanded it, or obtained to have it imposed; and so both of them are deceived, and deceiving one another; precedents for this, our days, as well as times past, may afford not a few; witness

the several oaths occasioned by the several changes of late.

First. The inconveniences and mischief that follow them that do swear; as, first, many people that do swear, they understand not what an oath is; neither, of that which is called an oath, many times they hear not one word that he which swears them says unto them, he speaks them over so fast; and the man knows nothing, sometimes, until a book be put to his lips; and yet what this poor ignorant man, having kissed the book, shall say, shall be of more force than divers witnesses, that have not yet sworn, or kissed the book; and it may be, that he being on the affirmative, shall be more believed than two or three on the negative, who have better understood their oaths, and spoken more to the purpose, upon their oaths, as it is called; and so he that is sworn on the affirmative, having once spoken a word, or sworn to it, he dares not go back, because of his oath; though upon hearing other witnesses speak to the same thing, he may be better informed, but dare not own any information, because sworn already to a contrary thing; which inconvenience would not be, if every man might witness forth his own knowledge without swearing, and yet to be punished for a false testimony, as much as if he had sworn false: do not many mourn, and go heavily, because of oaths, in this and other cases of the like nature?

Secondly. The inconveniences that follow those that cannot swear at all for conscience sake, whereby many are made uncapable of being made free of cities and corporations; and others are made uncapable of being made serviceable in the commonwealth, in any place or office of trust; and others also are made unserviceable, as to give their testimony and evidence in cases of difference between
man

man and man; besides many, who in divers cases, lose the benefit of the law of the nation, because that they cannot swear; and so by that means suffer the spoiling of their goods, and ungodly men make a prey upon them, knowing they cannot swear at all: which thing might be prevented, if according to the righteous law of God, all things were established out of the mouth of two or three witnesses; and those that bore false witness, to be punished, as he should have been against whom they have witnessed, if their testimony had been true, which law is equal and just.

Thirdly. This nation, which now mourns because of oaths, might be preserved from the wrath and indignation of God, that hangs over this nation, not only because of those that command men to swear, contrary to Christ's command, and that for to establish cruelty and injustice, but also because of those that swear falsely, and that against their own knowledge, for their own profit, and disadvantage of others, to accomplish their wicked, malicious, and revengeful designs against the innocent, who dare not swear at all, and thereby are made a prey to the teeth of the wolves, and to the wills of corrupt men, who take occasion, as it were, to plough furrows upon the back of the poor, and to oppress the needy; for which thing sake, the wrath of God shall be poured out upon the head of the wicked, and the nations shall be on heaps, and the wise men shall be turned backward, and their table shall be a snare, and the curse shall be upon the rebellious, and they shall fall, and be broken, and rise no more. And this may justly befall this nation, because of oaths, and because of oppression.

Now follows a word of advice to all those who say, the Scripture is their Rule, and are zealous for the things contained therein, &c.

Now all you that are seeking the kingdom of heaven in outward observations, by which it comes not, and are taking up practices, by imitation from commands laid down in the letter; let me demand of you, do you not find this command to proceed out of the mouth of Christ, viz. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all?" And do not you find the apostle James abiding in this doctrine? And hath it no room in your hearts? Have the traditions of your fathers made it void to you? Or is it because it cannot be practised without reproach, fines, and imprisonment, and so will cost you something which you cannot tell how to undergo, or part with, you having not received the gift to suffer for his name's sake? Or is your spirit different from David's, "who would not offer an offering to the Lord his God of that which cost him nothing?" In the fear of the Lord God of heaven and earth, I beseech you, consider, is there not a veil over your hearts untaken away to this day, that you cannot see nor understand this to be a command of Christ's, with divers others, as plainly and as fully laid down in the letter, as those you contend so much for? And may you not be as justly numbered amongst those that make their boast of the law, and yet through breaking of the law, dishonour God? Do ye think that the Lord will not arise to judgment, and make you know that he is the Lord, and that you have not walked in his statutes, neither executed his judgments, but have done after the manner of the Heathen, that are round about? whose ways Israel was not to learn, for their customs

toms were vain, Jeremiah x. 23. Ezekiel xi. 12. And upon a true and thorough search, when the hidden things of Esau shall be searched out, will you not be found walking in the way of the Heathen, speaking their unclean words, contrary to the language of the Scripture, and following their customs, which are vain, in respecting of men's persons, which the apostle James says, James ii. 9, 10, whoever do, "Commits sin, and are convinced of "the law as transgressors? For whosoever shall "keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, "is guilty of all." Mark that, and think not to cover yourselves with saying, It is meant of persons in judgment, for here is not a word spoken of magistrates, but the words are general, and concerns all that regard God's law, as appears by the next words, viz. "For whosoever shall keep "the whole, and yet offend in one point," &c. And are not they who respect persons, out of the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, who says, "How can ye believe, while ye receive honour one of another, "and seek not the honour that comes from God "only?" John v. 44. Matt. xxii. 16. "God only." Mark, "from God only;" and he himself practised this doctrine, for he neither received honour from man, nor regarded any man's person; as his very enemies bore testimony of him, that he taught the way of God truly, and regarded no man's person. But is not this command also too dear for you? Will it not cost you too much to practise? Do you not know it will hinder your promotion in the world? Are you not more afraid, that if you should refuse to respect mens persons, and to give flattering titles to men, Job xxxii. 21, 22. the gaoler would take you away, than that your maker would soon take you away, if you did do it? And is not this a command, that you should "not be conformed to this "world?"

“ world ? ” Rom. xii. 2. 16. and that you should not conform to men of high degree, but condescend to men of low degree. And are not these, with others, the commands of Christ ? And are not you too much like the professing Jews herein, who had plentiful knowledge of the letter without them, but had not his word abiding in them ? Though they could dispute and reason with Christ, and against his apostles, with the word of Truth ; yet Christ tells them plainly, his word was not abiding in them, which the saints had received from Christ, whereby they were made clean, and by it, which dwells richly in them, they made melody in their hearts to God ; and David the servant of the Lord, Psalm cxix. 6. 11. by the word which he had in his heart, he was kept from sin against God, and thereby had respect to all God’s commands. Now examine yourselves, and try your own selves, whether you be in the faith, and the same word of life be in you, and whose steps you walk in, and whom you are found imitators of ; whether Abraham, who forsook his country, to go to the land which the Lord had shewed him ? And Moses’s steps, who chose rather to suffer with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season ? Or whether you do not walk in the steps of him whom you so often upbraid others with, namely, Naaman the Assyrian, who spoke good words, and yet could not forsake his old master, to serve the Lord fully, 2 Kings v. 18. But when he went into the house of Rimmon, his master leaning on his hand, and he bowed down himself, in that thing he would be pardoned. Mark, In this thing pardon thy servant : he knew it was evil, and desired pardon for it ; and yet when his master leaned upon his hand, he must bow, lest he should lose his place, and gain his master’s displeasure. Now examine yourselves, doth not something
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let you see, that notwithstanding all the Lord hath done for you, and all that you have ever tasted or enjoyed from him, yet there is this thing, or the other thing, that you continue in the practice of, for one end or other, which you know you should not do; and in words you desire pardon for them, but you still continue in the same practice, your very prayers witnessing against you; and like those, James iv. 3. you are "still asking, but receive not, "because you ask amiss, to spend it upon your "lusts;" still to continue in your master's service, in conforming to the customs and fashions of the world, and in walking after the traditions of your fathers, as in particular in this case of swearing, which Christ hath so plainly and fully forbidden; and therefore your prayers return as dung in your faces, your consciences condemning of you; the which, if you did regard to keep void of offence, both towards God and towards men, in the light of Christ, you would have confidence towards God, and "whatsoever you asked of him, you would "receive, because you keep his commandments, "and do those things that are pleasing in his sight," John iii. 22. But now is blindness, barrenness, and leanness of soul upon you, and yet you cry you are rich, and you see, and have need of nothing, and hate and dispute against that which letteth you see the things which have need of pardon, and so you are "loaden with sin, and led away with divers lusts, "always learning, never able to come to the know- "ledge of the truth;" and therefore are not free, and in your principles conclude never can be, while you are in this world; and so by what hath been said, you may see your own condition, as a man sees his face in a glass, how that you not only respect men's persons, preferring one before another, but also Christ's commands, picking out what you like,

like, and what may keep you in the repute of the world, and preserve you in the preferment thereof, but those that may expose you to hazard, or make you liable to the world's scorn, though as fully and expressly required by Christ (of all his followers) to be kept and observed, you let slip, and pass by, as a thing of nought: but "be not deceived, God will not be mocked, for what a man soweth, that shall he reap; he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption:" and this shall you assuredly receive at his hand, if you repent not of your double mind, "you shall lie down in sorrow, and he shall laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear comes."

Now follow some Reasons or Grounds, whereby the Spiritual Eye, or the Man whose Understanding is opened, may come to see the Necessity of the abolishing of Swearing, since the Days of Christ's coming in the Flesh.

First, Because all the things of the law were but shadows of the good things to come, Heb. xii. 1. But Christ is the substance of all those types and shadows, and is come into the world, and is manifest in his saints, and true Christians, and hath given them an understanding, whereby they know him that is true, and are in him that is true, and he in them, and he works all their works for them, and in them, and teacheth them to speak truth simply, without guile or fraud, and as he is, so are they in this world, and believe in him, and follow his steps, who is the truth, and in whose mouth there was found no guile.

Secondly, Because swearing implies unbelief, to be either in the person swearing, or in him for whose

whose sake the oath is taken or sworn; which is not to be supposed to be in those, as predominant or ruling, who are saints, or true Christians, who are redeemed not only from a vile, but a vain conversation also, and from the traditions of their fathers, that are not after Christ, and from fear and unbelief also, and every evil word and way, and are called unto holiness and truth, and are without fault before the throne of God, which things are found in the new heart, that is God's gift, and in the new man that is created after God, and renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him; and so they are come to the end of all oaths, and out of fears, and doubts, and unbelief, to have strong consolation through Christ Jesus, the way to the Father.

Thirdly, Because herein, namely, by the abolishing of swearing, doth the excellency, precedency, and eminency, of the new covenant, exceed the old; for the old in this was faulty, viz. that it made nothing perfect, but this new covenant and better hope doth; for in this covenant all the children of the Lord are taught of the Lord, and great is their peace, and out of strife and contention, and the use of oaths, are they come, into the covenant of light and peace, in which they rest with God, in the sense of the forgiveness of their sins, and the blessedness of their state, wherein their iniquity is remembered no more; for their tents are beautiful, and their habitations are pleasant: and here is Jacob inheriting the blessing, in whom God sees no sin; and the true Israelites indeed, who walk according to the rule, and in whom he sees no iniquity, but peace is his portion for ever. Of what hath been spoken, this is the sum, that Christ hath forbid all manner of swearing in all cases whatsoever; and this doctrine was continued in by
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his apostles, and practised by the true Christians in the first ages of the church, and hath been sealed with the blood of martyrs, and borne witness to by some in many ages, down to this day; and the contrary practice is a Popish innovation, and a design to keep down the true head of the church, and to set up him, and to keep his authority a foot, whom the Lord is arising to destroy with the spirit of his mouth, and to consume with the brightness of his coming, who hath been, and is the cause of so much bloodshed, and discord, and variance, among the children of men, whereby self hath kept the throne, and equity and righteousness hath fallen in the streets, and he that departs from iniquity, hath made himself a prey, and the manner and customs of the Heathen hath been followed, even by those who have professed a zeal for Christ and his commands, who while they have been professing of them, have made them void by the traditions of men; and true Christianity with saintship, by their means, is become a reproach, and the name of the Lord hath been blasphemed among the Heathen, because of these things; but the Lord is arising, as a giant refreshed with wine, who hath seen the desolate state of his spouse, and is saying to Zion, Arise, shine, thy light is come, for the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, shake off the dust from thy feet, put on thy beautiful garment, for thou shalt be no more termed desolate, or forsaken; and to the brightness of thy rising shall nations come, and princes to thy beauty, and thou shalt be crowned with renown for ever; and the everlasting gates shall be opened, and the righteous nation that keeps the truth, shall enter in; and none shall be able to make them afraid: and this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord for ever.

But

But because of swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and whoring, they break out, and blood toucheth blood, therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwells therein shall be cut off, Hosea iv. 2, 3.

From henceforth let no man think it strange, that any denies to swear at all, but rather wonder, that the God of this world should so long have blinded the minds of them that believe not, in the light of of the Son of God, lest, by the shining of the light in their hearts, they should come to the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ, and by him should be taught to speak truth without swearing, and so he become the head over all things to the church, who is God over all, blessed for evermore. Amen.

FOURTEEN REASONS

DRAWN FROM

*The LAW of GOD, the LAW of ENGLAND, and
RIGHT REASON;*

TO SHEW

*Why divers true Christians, called Quakers,
Refuse to Swear at all.*

*For the Satisfaction of all the Upright in Heart, that
the Innocent may not be condemned with the Wicked.*

I. **B**ECAUSE Christ Jesus, the King and Law-giver to his people, hath said, "Swear not at all," Mat. v. and it is left upon record for our practice, and is so sure, that no averment lies good against it: which doctrine was practised before the apostacy, and promoted by the apostles in their day; as may be seen, James v. Which may serve for an answer, in this case, unto them that plead for swearing; as Christ said upon another occasion, which was permitted in the old time of the law, but was not so from the beginning: so Christ, the Truth, redeems his children out of the fall, and all that have come in by it, unto himself, who hath commanded his followers "not to swear at all."

II. Because in the old time, when swearing was used, according to God's command, expressed in the

the law of Moses, and also instanced by the apostle Paul, who was a Jew, and wrote unto the Jews; unto whom he signified, in his epistle, both the end and use of swearing, in those times and cases wherein it was used; who knew very well what was ceremonial and typical, and what was moral and perpetual, and therefore mentioneth an oath in his epistle aforesaid, by way of figure and similitude, which he instanceth in the particular practice of it at that time, saying, "An oath of confirmation is to them the end of all strife;" and so Christ, God's oath and covenant, the substance of all shadows and figures, puts an end to all strife and variance between God and that man which takes hold of Christ, and receives him into the heart by the living faith, whereby he hath strong consolation, according to the saying of the apostle, whose end in mentioning swearing in that sixth of the Hebrews, is only by way of allusion and similitude, and proves no more a necessity of the lawfulness or continuance of swearing, because he mentions the word oath, than men's living in strife proves the lawfulness or necessity of the continuance of strife, because in the same place he mentions the word strife also; the which, if it should be concluded from his words, would make the apostle a transgressor, and guilty of building again the thing that he destroyed in his epistle, elsewhere, who concluded the Corinthians as carnal, and that not only because they walked as men, which he blames them for, but also because they lived in strife and envyings, &c. So that all which the forementioned place, Heb. 6. proves, is only this, that when an oath was used in old time amongst the Jews, according to God's appointment, it was in those cases which would put an end to strife; and so is of authority sufficient to condemn all oaths now, that are either used where there is no strife at all, or else in

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those cases wherein oaths are taken; and the strife not ended, which if observed, the oath of obedience cannot justly be required.

III. Because, when swearing was in use, as aforesaid, we never read that it was required, upon such a penalty as now it is, either by the common statute law of England, until King James his time, upon occasion of the gun-powder plot; which oath was made by the parliament, as the likeliest expedient, in that juncture of time, to prevent like designs; and also to find out the Pope's alliances and emissaries in these kingdoms; as may be seen both by the preambles to the statutes, and also by the substance and contents of the said oath; and not at all intending those that are true Protestants, who were not tainted with that cursed Popish principle of breaking faith with an heretick, and deposing excommunicated princes, as may be seen by the statute aforesaid; much less those who could not swear at all in conscience to an oath, because Christ hath forbid it.

IV. Because the ruler professing Christianity, and his subjects also professing the same, it ought not to be supposed, that that God, whom the true Christians worship, who hath, by an instinct in nature, obliged relations so firmly, that he hath never required any other security for the performance thereof, than that bond which he himself hath made: and would it not be accounted preposterous and absurd, for to swear a child to his father, or a wife upon marriage, to her husband? And is it any whit less absurd and needless, to swear a true Christian subject to a Christian king, seeing the command of God no less requires obedience to him, than to the other relations? And doth not this promise as much, or more, belong to him that rules for God, as to any particular Christian? viz. Who shall harm

harm you, if you follow that which is good? And will not God punish rebellion as the sin of witchcraft, which is security sufficient for a Christian prince? And therefore ought not to impose an oath upon them, who cannot swear for conscience sake.

V. Because an oath, in this case, hath been found by experience to be insufficient, as to answer the end for which it is given; and therefore, for the refusing of it, by true Christians, as aforesaid, or those that cannot swear at all, ought not to make them liable to the penalty of the statute; and to prove that it is not able to answer the end aforesaid, witness all those at any time, who have been found in rebellion against the king; Who have they been, but the swearers, and liars, and covenant breakers? So that their oaths have been of no more use to them, than to beget a persuasion in themselves, that now their prince is satisfied concerning their loyalty, and they may plot with less suspicion; and so with Judas will cry, Hail Master, and kiss him, that they may get their rewards, and bring their designs to pass.

VI. Because he that swears, is either a true man, or a false; if a true man, his honesty, without an oath, engageth him to performance; but if a false man, he will swear, rather than forfeit his liberty and estate; and so his oath doth but save himself, but is no security to the king: and it may easily be supposed, that he that will swear for his own advantage only, will not refuse to plot, when he may do it, as he thinketh, for his own preferment, especially considering, he that swears allegiance, and yet proves a traitor, is no more punished, than he that commits treason, and swears not at all: and therefore seeing swearing cannot bind a knave, and goodness will bind an honest man, what sound reason then can be given, why the good man should be

so severely punished, only, because he cannot swear at all?

VII. Because the oath of judges and justices, which is to do equal law, and execution of right, to all the king's loving subjects; which oath is not observed, except the judge distinguish, and put a difference between them, who only refuse to swear, because all oaths are forbidden; and those who refuse to swear, because allegiance is required; for the one likes not the thing sworn to, and the other owns the thing, but denies the oath; and to punish him that denies to swear in the one sense, equally with him, who refuseth to swear in the other sense, is neither execution of equal law, nor right, and so not according to their oaths aforesaid.

VIII. Because that the king's safety depends, not upon swearing, but upon performing the thing to which the oath is required; and if that be given, or yielded, the end is answered, though there be no swearing at all; and therefore the penalty for not taking the oath, ought not to be imposed upon them, who refuse to swear in conscience to an oath, especially considering the law hath provided another penalty for them, as in cases of high treason, if guilty thereof, and to require two securities for one debt, seems to be unreasonable, and is no less absurd, than for a man, who hath a just debt owing unto him upon a bond, which debt is proffered to be paid according to the contents of the bond, but will not be received (by the creditor) except the person will first swear to perform the same.

IX. Because to punish so severely, as to the loss of liberty and estate for the refusal of a ceremony, as it is called by the imposers thereof, and that denied out of conscience to Christ's command, is contrary both to the nature and end of the law, which is to punish for offences; and therefore to stand upon the

the letter or ceremony, when the truth and substance thereof is answered, is to make the law become cruel, to kill and destroy, and not merciful to save; which is all one, as if a man should say, The sun was only to scorch and burn, and not to warm nor give light; and as if the earth should be said only to bury, and not to bring forth increase.

X. Because it hath been observed, by statutes, as in the statute of the first of Queen Mary, that love and honesty bind stronger to king and governors, than the severity of laws, made with extreme pains and rigorous punishments, for not obeying their sovereign, ruler, and governor, &c. And therefore the oath of obedience, which was made by the parliament, as in anger and haste, against the Papists, being provoked thereunto by the gun-powder plot, the occasion of making that statute, &c. And therefore ought not, in the cool of the day, to be stood upon according to the formalities of it, the substance being kept to: besides, in the third part of Coke's Institutes, cap. 74, he saith, ' That there
' were certain poor Christians, that had spoken
' against the worshipping of images, in justification
' of God's command,' as many do now, against swearing at all, because Christ hath forbidden it, yet notwithstanding, then as now, those poor Christians were by the bishops of that time, sworn to worship images; which oath, saith Coke, ' was
' against the expresse command of God,' and therefore ought not to have been imposed, ' and the
' law of the nation, because they had no warrant to
' minister the same.' And if this was condemned in that day, and that by the Chief Justice of England, who also is called the oracle of the law, it may well be hoped, that the like evil practice will not be justified in this time of greater light; although some plead for swearing now against Christ's

command, as some did then, for the worshipping of images against God's command.

XI. Because, to take away men's liberties and estates, because they cannot swear at all, cannot be drawn into example for others, except to teach them to swear, which they are apt enough to do without example; for the rule of the law is, *pæna ad paucos ut metus ad omnes perveniat*; the punishment is to a few, that all may fear; which is not observed in this case, because the punishment for refusing to swear at all, cannot become an example to deter men from committing treason; and therefore the penalty aforesaid, ought not to be inflicted, as in the case of Coke's third part of institutes, where he mentions a man committing treason, if he prove not *sanæ memoriæ*, he shall not be called to answer; or, if after judgment he becomes so, he shall not be executed: and the reason given by Coke, is, Because it cannot be an example to others; which reason is much more true in the case in hand.

XII. Because it was a brand upon Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he caused Israel to sin; which he did, by causing them to worship the calves at Dan and Bethel, which he had set up, though under a plausible pretence, as may be seen in scripture, yet notwithstanding their obeying his command, this thing was their sin: so in like manner would it be sin now in them, who cannot swear at all, because Christ hath commanded so, if they should take the oath of allegiance, or any other oath which he hath forbidden.

XIII. Because the proceedings of the ministers of the law, are, and have been, more irregular in their apprehending and securing of those persons unto whom they tender the oaths, than their denial to take the oaths may be deemed to be; because the former is against the very fundamental laws of
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Magna Charta, and the Petition of Right; with several other laws, that are expressly against the searching of men's houses, and securing of their persons by soldiers or armed men, in the times of peace: as also is signified by the king's proclamation, where he saith, ' That for the future such things shall not ' be practised; and if any do, they shall incur his ' displeasure, and be proceeded against according to ' law;' which is such an implication as amounts to an affirmation, that what has been done hitherto in that kind, is contrary to law; besides, an error in the foundation, is of more danger than in any other part of the building: but the latter, which are those that deny to take the oath, is only against a law made in haste or anger, as aforesaid, are but against the ceremony, or *forma verbalis*, and not against *forma legalis*, or substance of the said law; and therefore by *lex talionis*, may by many degrees be better dispensed withal than the former.

XIV. Because of the many differing judgments about Christ's words, swear not at all, which ministers a strong ground of suspicion, that there is a confederacy among, and between those, who agree like Herod and Pilate, to destroy Christ's words from being a command to forbid all swearing; and yet fall out about their opinions, when they come to get fairly rid of his words; for one saith, that Christ's words, not at all, are meant not swearing in ordinary communication, and so only extend to forbid profane and common swearing; which cannot be Christ's intention, because that was forbidden in old time, as appeareth both by two instances he nameth himself, as neither to forswear themselves, nor to swear and not perform: and also when it was said, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; but Christ's words forbid that that was not forbid-

den in old time, as may be seen by the analogy of the place, but I say unto you, &c.

Others they find fault with the Greek word *ἐλας* and say, it may rather signify commonly, frequently, altogether, &c. and so do not only blemish the disciples of Christ, to whom he spoke those words, as if they should be common or frequent swearers, but also cast dirt upon Christ himself, as if he would allow his disciples, or connive at their swearing sometimes in their communication, so they do it but seldom, or now and then, and not altogether, or commonly and frequently: and so would rather expose Christ to be censured for his conniving at his disciples swearing sometimes in their communication, if they do it not commonly, &c. than let the words, not at all, stand, though it better answers the objector's sense, than any of his forced meanings; but then all swearing must be forbidden, which is a doctrine hard to be practised in suffering times, by those who love their ease, more than Christ; or else such might have known, that a mean Grecian may know that the word is translated right enough, and hath been so adjudged, by them who love swearing as well as this objector, and better saves the analogy of the text, than any of the other senses; and it will be hard for the objector to find a Greek word that so properly signifies, not at all, as the word in the text; and therefore Christ's words, not at all, may better stand than theirs, who have a mind to swear.

Others say, by his words, not at all, are meant, not swearing at all, by any creature, as the hair of the head, or temple, &c. But it is no more true than the former, because that oath also was condemned in the old time, for they were to swear only by the living God: besides, he that swears by the temple, swears by him that dwells therein, as saith
Christ

Christ elsewhere; but if this meaning were true, the oath they plead for would be made void, which is by or upon a book, which is made of creatures, as paper, and ink, and leather, &c. and by or upon the evangelists, according to their oath, who were men and creatures. And so according to this interpretation, such make themselves transgressors, by building again by their practice, what they destroyed by their opinions.

Others say, by not swearing at all, is meant, only in the church; but we may swear, when called to it by rulers of the world, &c. And this is also as false as the rest, and these cannot clear themselves from a confederacy with them, to destroy Christ's doctrine; because, That which is an offence in the church, or in a corner, is aggravated, by being committed in the world, as upon the house top.

Others say, by not swearing at all, is meant, only concerning Christ's condemning the false glosses, and sayings of the Pharisees, and not intended by him to straiten swearing from what it was in the old time. But this interpretation will not excuse these from a confederacy with all the former, to destroy the simplicity of Christ's doctrine; for it is evident by the context, that them of old time were the true prophets and servants of the Lord, as may be seen, Matt. v. 21. where it is said, by them of old time, the Greek is, to them of old time, as may be seen upon the margin of the bibles, and so plainly intends those, to whom God spake, which was Moses and the true prophets, not the false, as these confederates would make them. Besides all these following instances which Christ mentions, being God's commands given by Moses, as, Thou shalt not kill, one of God's commands, but now is straitened by Christ, who saith, " He that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of
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“ the judgment.” And verse 27. where another command saith, “ Thou shalt not commit adultery;” which is also straitened by Christ in these words, “ But I say unto you, whosoever looketh upon a woman, to lust after her, &c. which other instances he gives, no more Pharisaical than these: by all which we may see the several exceptions named by Christ, and not left to man’s will, viz. Where the exception to be angry, is, without a cause; and the exception to the looking upon a woman, is, to lust after her; and the exception concerning divorce, is, saving for the cause of fornication. And therefore seeing in all these cases the particular exceptions are named, it may not be supposed, that he would have omitted it in the case of swearing, if he had intended any at all. And therefore these confederates thus differing in their judgments, it may be easily concluded by a wise man, That there is more cause than bare suspicion, that these are agreed and resolved, to frustrate Christ’s command, whatsoever the consequences be: and therefore it is neither reason nor equity, that the innocent should suffer by reason of the confederates aforesaid; or have their liberties and estates taken away from them, because they are bold to assert Christ’s doctrine, and dare not break his commands, nor follow a multitude to do evil.

J. CROOK,

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EPISTLE FOR UNITY

TO PREVENT THE

WILES OF THE ENEMY.

DEAR lambs of my Father's fold, who have been rescued out of the hands of the devourer, and known the sore bitings of the wolves, and the affrightning roarings of the lions, and the craft of the foxes, who made a prey upon you, while you were without a shepherd, and while you were in the open field, and upon the wide mountains, without an hedge about you, or a wall to defend you; but every wild beast, and ravening bird, was ready to prey upon you, and there was no one found either to pity or gather you, until the good shepherd, from whose fold you had strayed, sought you out, and brought you home, some upon his shoulders, and some drove gently, and others, who would have run away after you were found, being accustomed to wander, and in love with your wandering, he constrained by his sharpness; after whom he hath had a watchful eye, because of your liableness to go astray again, to feed by yourselves, and not with the rest of the flock, whereby you have been liable not only to be torn by the briars and thorns, but also to be bitten with the wolf, and other preying beasts, unto your wounding again.

O all ye lambs and sheep of my Father's fold!
Were you not all torn and wounded by going astray,
and

and many of you ready to perish of your wounds, and weary with complaining? And yet could not but complain, but were even tired out of that also; so that you did but add to your own sorrow, whereby you made your condition worse than the worst, by being your own tormentors; your sorrow keeping you from rest, and your complaints from feeding, where others got some relief: and your strength being wasted, and your power gone, so that you could not shift nor flee, but lay open to the spoiler, to execute his fury upon you; so helpless were you in yourselves in that day: and in this state were many of you found, when the Shepherd of Israel arose to seek his sheep. Oh! do you not remember these things? Was not your grief unutterable, and your pain grown to that extremity, that you had perished immediately, if he had not found you when he did? O! how were some of you fled into solitary holes, and others into the clefts of the craggy rocks, and were mourning there, desiring that your eyes were as a fountain of tears, because of the wickedness of the wicked, and miserable state of mankind, and there was no helper found? And others of you like a sparrow chirping alone upon the house top, seeing over the world, with all its glory; and yet could not tell how to get rid of it, but still had an eye over it, and yet could not break through it: and this caused you to sigh and mourn, and you could not meet with a mate or companion amongst all the sons of Adam; and so inward sorrow wasted your strength, and outward griefs consumed your flesh; and when you went to break through, you were torn by the briars and thorns, that you could not find a way to escape. And others of you, who had learned to herd with the beasts of the field, and could eat of their bread, and drink of their drink, and lie down in their resting place; Oh! how did the

the Shepherd chase you with his judgments, and hunt you with his crosses and afflictions outward and inward, to bring you home? And what care hath he taken, since your recovery, to keep you in the fold amongst the lambs, that you may no more find out any of your old walks and haunts, but be kept for ever to feed with the lambs, that you all might lie down together, as sheep of one fold.

O my bowels, my bowels! my heart, my heart! and all that is within me, is pained for you, and mourns in secret after you, and cries day and night unto the Shepherd, to look after you, and take care of you all, that none of you be lost, nor that any of you stray, nor be worried, nor hunted any more; but that you may for ever lie down together, and neither hurt, grieve, nor offend one another, nor harden those who yet go astray; but that all may be kept in the sense of what, and where, once you were, and of the love, care, and mercy, that pitied you then, and healed and bound you up, and brought you home, and passed by the remembrance of all your trespasses, and loved you freely. Oh! let the bowels of the Shepherd to you, beget compassions unto the scattered, and unto one another, who will again soon be scattered, if he should look not after you! For you were all once in that nature, by which you were children of wrath, and in darkness as well as others; and wherein any of you differ, either from what yourselves once were, or from what others are, it is by that which you have freely received.

Oh! art thou strong in the Lord? And have many great things been done by thee; and many mighty men been made to fall before thee by his power; and the host of the Philistines been put to flight; and the power of darkness, and Satan, the prince thereof, been withstood, and made to turn
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his back, and vail to him thy strength; and the dead been raised thereby, and the graves opened at his word, which went out of thy mouth? And many which were bound, as in fetters of iron, have been loosed by him; and others, that have been shut up close prisoners, in the pit where they saw no light; and yet at his rebuke, and lifting up of his voice, the dead have risen, and those prisoners come forth, and sounded out the praises of that God, in whose power you did it? And hath the tongue of the learned been in thy mouth, and the weary been refreshed by thee, and the mourners been comforted through hearing of thy delightful voice; so that the evil spirits have fled away, when thou hast taken up thy harp, and all the minstrels and worldly joys have departed at his appearance; so terrible was his presence, and dreadful his countenance, that no eye was so quick, as to abide undazzled before him; nor any craft or deceit so closely couched, but it startled when he made search; nor any paint so artificial, but it melted before his dissolving presence, and scorching glory; so that all spirits were discerned, and tried, and judged with righteous judgments, in the day of his strength? O! how did the wise men of Egypt, and the soothsayer, peepers and diviners, with all the magicians and masters of that crew, together with all the merchants of Babylon, flee before him, like the routing of a mighty army, and scattering of all their generals, and officers of command? How wast thou, and thy companions, in the strength of the Lord, like David with all his worthies? And how have you, like mighty men, by his power, broke through the whole camp of the uncircumcised, to bring water unto the thirsty? What service was too hard for you to venture upon, to relieve the captives, and set free them who were bound,

bound, who, like Sampson, have broken all the cords and bindings of the Philistines, and snapped them asunder like a thread? With many more achievements that have been done by his arm, which time would fail to record; but living monuments remain, as pillars and standards reared up, to keep in remembrance what hath been done by the strength of the God whom you served, to his praise and eternal glory for ever.

For, was it not all by his own arm, and his everlasting strength, that out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he might ordain strength, and perfect his praise for ever? Yea, was any thing yours in all this work, besides the obedience to his power? And was it not all his, that no flesh might glory in his presence? Therefore, O all you children of the Lord, without respect of persons, that have seen his wonders, and mighty goings forth, and have beheld his marvellous doings, not only as spectators, but sharers in the victories, and dividers of the spoil with the mighty, whose souls have been delivered out of captivity, and rescued from the land of darkness; who have drank of the water of life, that hath been brought unto you by the valiants of Israel, through the hazard of their lives: Oh do not you forget the sweetness of the waters; nor the dangers they ran, who ventured through the enemies camp to bring it unto you, with their lives in their hands. Oh! how sweet it was unto you then, and how did you prize it beyond all the rivers of Damascus? Let your love never abate unto it, but heighten more and more; for it is not of a glutting or wearing nature, but provokes the appetite, and stirs up the desire after more of the same for ever. For it is the vitiated palate that blames good diet, and the full stomach that loaths the

the honeycomb; but the true seed drink the wine new continually in the Father's kingdom, and the redeemed sing a new song, and have all things new and fresh, as the water out of the fountain, springing up into eternal life; where nothing can remain in the old channel, but is washed away by the running of the pure water, that proceeds from the fountain. Hear ye, hear ye, O ye children of Jacob, what is the advice and counsel of a poor redeemed captive, once your companion in bonds, and now in freedom! Oh! as we mourned once under the oppression of the oppressor together, so let us now rejoice in that love, that hath pitied and set us free; let nothing stop our mouths from praising, nor our hearts from rejoicing, in the ocean of eternal kindness and mercy, that hath delivered us: Oh! let us haste first upon the top of mount Gerizim, opening our mouths in blessings and thanksgivings unto our God for ever, who hath made and chosen us to be a people, that were not a people, that we may keep his statutes, and delight in his law; and then let us stand upon mount Ebal, that the curses and righteous judgments of the Lord may come upon the head of the wicked one, and all that would divide us from God, or one from another; and whatsoever rejoiceth in unrighteousness, or delighteth in false judgment, and upon that root of bitterness, that brings forth gall and wormwood, that nothing may escape the righteous stroke of the Almighty, with all that genders to bondage, or would entangle our hearts and minds, whereby that sweet peace and rest, and satisfaction in the Lord God, might not be enjoyed, as heretofore it hath been; for the wicked one will be sowing his tares in the night of security and carelessness, and it will soon spread and grow, that thou canst not get it rooted out of thy heart and mind, but

it will eat, defile and stain, that thy very comeliness will be disfigured, and thy beauty which once thou hadst will be marred by it; so that now, thou, who sometimes wast tender and full of love and meekness, wilt be so changed, that nothing but roughness and envyings of Jacob's blessings secretly follow thee, with an evil eye to spy out new faults, and a memory to call to mind the old infirmities of thy brethren; whereby thou wilt have a large treasury of evil in thy heart, which will be furnishing thy mind and thoughts with unprofitable matter, unto the daily wounding of thy life, and clouding of thy understanding, and thickening of the vail and mask over thy beauty: and all this may be done by the enemy, under pretence of valour, and witness bearing, against formality and deceit. Oh! how easy is it for the simple to be deceived here, and the strong to be betrayed, as through Dalilah's flatteries, saying, it is for want of love to God, and zeal for him; if a testimony without delay be not borne, and a dislike shewed, against such and such things; whereby the angry part will soon get up, and quench the love to brethren, and drown the mercy, so that all will be covered besides the hard rocks, and lofty mountains; and upon these they may see afar into the enemy's country, but cannot behold the holy land, with its inhabitants, on the other side the sea. And from hence, if the watch be not kept, may even the valiants in Israel receive a stroke, and come to a loss, by this craft and disguise of the evil one.

And then others perceiving it, against whom the offence was taken, not dwelling always in the love that covers all, but venturing too much to take the air, and to walk as upon the walls, without the castle, may soon let in the knowledge, and taking notice of it, which will beget the same in them; whereby the distance will be increased, and the evil

will gain ground, and the enemy will soon shew himself to the troubling of Israel; and so will the evil seed be scattered abroad, and gender unto more ungodliness, for want of a timely prevention, both in the one and in the other: and thus may the lambs of my Father's fold be disturbed by the little foxes, who should be taken by the watchmen of Israel, that they might not wander to hurt.

Therefore, O ye children, and mighty men, with the leaders of the tribe of Israel! Remember how easy it is for you all to miscarry, if the watch be not diligently kept; for Satan will be standing at the right hand of Joshua, to resist him. Oh call to mind what is recorded in the Scriptures of Truth! How the man of God, after he had gone forth and finished his message, in crying against the altar at Bethel, and after he had withstood the temptation of the king, was slain by the lion, for going from the word of the Lord in himself, and hearkening unto the counsel of the old prophet, whereby he was deceived, and returned not according to the command of the Lord. And, my dear brethren, Paul, a champion in Israel, and master builder in God's work, saw need, in the bowels of love and mercy, that the faithful, without respect of persons, should watch one over another; did, as need required, say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. And did not Satan present himself amongst the sons of God, in the days past, when they were met together; and, O remember, the serpent got into Paradise, to tempt from the innocency; who is the same that ever he was, and most busy about those who are chiefest in the work of the Lord; for who was so tempted as the Son of God? Therefore let the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, lest they also be tempted; for we all stand by faith: and he

he that is most in the life of the Son, is most sensible of the hurts of others, and most touched with the feeling of their wounds; not slightly passing by, like the priest and Levite; but mercifully pitying and healing, like the good Samaritan: for it is a symptom of hardness in him, that makes flight of the wounds and bruises of his brethren; thereby pouring brine into their wounds, rather than the oil of love and tenderness; such physicians rather help to fester, than cure the hurt; and to increase the pain, than to stop the spreading of the disease; whereby a little slip does prove a dangerous sprain, and a small bruise sometimes to the loss of a member, and grieving of the whole body; and all for want either of skill or sense, or both, in the physician: where skill is wanting, there the physician may administer that which doth increase the distemper, and thereby disparage himself, and endanger the patient; and where sense is wanting, there austerity and rigidity is usually met withal. So that he which feeds the lambs, and hurts them not, must himself be conformable to Christ, who is holy and harmless, and separate from defilement, and touched with the feeling of their infirmities; having shoulders to carry the lame on, as well as a tongue to direct the ignorant; and arms to bear up the weary, as well as feet to go before them in example; and one who ought to feed the lambs, as a testimony of his own love to the Father; and wash their feet, as an example of humility; not seeking honour, lest he be infected with lordliness thereby; and so by seeking pre-eminence, by eldership, or some other outward thing, hurt the lambs, and stop the simplicity, that otherwise would have had them highly in esteem, for their work's sake in the power, but now will be hindered, because looked for; whereby the enemy will get advantage, of the one by seek-

ing it, and the other by taking notice of it, that prejudice will increase, and the life in both be hurt, and all for want of watching, to be content with the honour that comes from God only, and himself to be as one that serveth the lowest and weakest babe, striving rather to be under all, than seeking to be over any; counting it honour to serve, knowing sensibly, that one is their Father and Master, even God, and they have all but one Lord and Master; unto which, both he that teacheth, and they that are taught, must be subject, as the body unto the wisdom and direction of the head; so must all be unto Christ, the promised seed: and if any hold not the head, they run into the error, and so out of the sense, by which only the members can serve one another in love, the law which God hath set to govern the body by; for he that is most in the seed, is most in the life, and so in the sense whereby the unity and sympathy in the body is preserved; and that member most grieves for the hurts and bruises of the rest, where the sense is quickest, whereby its usefulness in the body is discerned, and the double esteem and honour is given unto it by all the living members, which is not sought by him, but given freely by others, because they are sensible of the usefulness of that member to the body; and so is the whole edified in, and built up by love. But if, through any prevalent humour, the health of any be impaired, whereby the sense is lost or benumbed, that it feels not when others are hurt, and yet will continue to officiate in the body, whereby the rest are grieved; yet in that case it must not be ruggedly fallen upon, lest, through its own unsensibleness, it hurt the living members, without either mercy or sense, and so either make them grieve, or wholly unsensibly also, unto the increasing of farther discord in the body; but rather gentleness and forbearance

bearance must be used, as by the application, not of harshness, and present judging, or standing at a distance, but, of warm clothes, and suppling oils, used by a gentle hand, with much pains, and often exhortation, in the stirrings of love, and risings of the life; and yet feeds not the benumbedness, or senselessness, but cherisheth the life, and so recovers the sense, whereby it is restored to the former office in the body, and more filled with compassion, usefulness, and diligence, than before; and the other members are now made more sensible of the benefit of patience and long-suffering, and see from whence that springs, that would limit unto seven times, and how narrow and short it is of the fulness of mercy itself, that is unlimited, but binds the limiting spirit, unto the perfecting of the praises of the God of everlasting goodness and mercy. And thus will the wiles of the enemy be prevented, and the body preserved in unity, and edify itself in love: and hereby will the world be convinced, that you are the disciples of Christ, and have learned of him to love one another, and in love, as the members of the natural body, to serve one another, and to minister to its benefit, of the ability which God giveth, and from the rising of the life, and breaking forth of it, as the sun from under a cloud, and not under a veil or burden; but wait until the way be clear in thy own particular, and the power hath wrought through and scattered all clouds; and then, with open face, and not from under a veil, doth the word of life go forth to the cherishing of the tender babes and plants, and so there will be a springing of the life in all; and then he that so ministers, saves himself, and those that hear him; and neither wants milk to feed himself, nor the word to minister to others; but will distinguish in himself between the word, and the milk of it, and also between that which

looks at the passing away of the time, and to answer the expectation of others in words, or the keeping of its own authority over others, and that which dwells in the cross unto all these things, heeding nothing but the rising of the life, and overcoming of the power, and so knows how to behave himself in the church of God, both when to begin, and when to make an end; ministering in the life, and reaching to the seed, and not to the judgment and affections only, feeling in himself when the seed is raised, and the power stirs in another; which sense makes him cease, that the life may speak in whom and when it pleaseth: and so nothing will be quenched, nor any burthened, but unity will be preserved, and all lordship and mastery destroyed, and every member have its liberty, without being restrained by any thing besides the power; and so every one will prefer others before themselves, keeping no authority over any, but minding the arising of the power in their own hearts. For what knowest thou, but the power may be quiet and still in thee, be thou never so strong, that it may shew itself in a weaker vessel, and perfect its praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings; which may be hindered by thy negligence, in not minding the power in thyself, and God's end in exercising thee in silence, rather than speaking; which may be, either to speak himself in some weaker babe, or to come forth in thee with greater power, after long exercise and silence, and patient waiting, in the cross to thy own will, and all that would be any thing out of the power: and hereby the simplicity in all will guide, and the several gifts, given for edification of the whole, will shine; and no candle be under a bushel, nor any signification of the spirit resisted, but all will be as servants unto it. And so in this order will there be time for the lambs to feed

feed, in their green pasture, as well as others to be exhorted, and the world instructed. And so will your meetings be as a feast, and the elders sitting as upon thrones (judging) not so much what words are spoken, as what life and power is stirring, all laying down their crowns at the feet of him that sits upon the throne: and so will all take heed how they hear, as well as what they hear; and they that speak, as well know in what they speak, as what words they utter; whereby all will be done unto the praise and glory of God in the churches, and many will rejoice to behold your order. And this is that behaviour in the church of God which all must learn, that there may be no schism in the body, but all may be preserved in unity for ever, and in the tender bowels of compassion one unto another; all being sensible what trespasses have been forgiven them by God, the Father of mercies; and they, his children, will be merciful like him, knowing their daily dependence is upon him; and they have no strength nor ability, either to stay where they are, or to go on to perfection, but as it freely flows from him, upon whom they depend every day for fresh springs, as the babe upon the mother's breast.

Therefore, O ye children of the living God, be like minded unto your Father, in mercy and love one to another, and in his fear to consider these things, that in his saving health you may be kept, and none hurt or bruised amongst you.

Meet in the faith, and in God's fear, that your minds may not be suffered to wander, because of the diligent watch, but mind feeding more than hearing, every one coming as unto a feast, and sitting as in the market-place, in the pure light of the Sun of Righteousness, that all your souls wants may be supplied, and every one return laden and filled with the milk and honey of the good land, that it

may be known and taken notice of by all that converse with you, or come amongst you, that you have been with Jesus, and have received his virtue, from the touches of his life; whereby you that come to meetings, bowed down and heavy laden, may go away with your issues stopped, and your burdens removed, praising the name of the Lord.

And let him that ministereth, first feel the state and condition of the meeting in himself, by the sensible stirrings of the life; not judging according to the sight of the eye, or hearing of the ear, but with righteous judgment in the life; minding more their state, as represented in the power, than by any outward intelligence; that so the word may be divided aright, and not handled deceitfully, according to any outward guess or judgment, nor corrupted by intermingling the words that man's wisdom teacheth; but let the life put on what clothes he please, and as it dresseth itself, so let it appear and go forth; thou being as the trumpet, but the breath of life must make the sound, in what order it pleaseth; and so will all the babes be refreshed with its melody, and the sound be certain, that every soldier may be prepared to battle, to help the Lord against the mighty, in their own hearts and bosoms; and so will the blessings of the Lord be amongst you.

Let not time limit you, but in the power and wisdom of God, wait to know when he gives leave to depart in perfect freedom, lest any go away burdened, by having something stirring in them, and moving to speak, or pray, or otherwise sound out the goodness of the Lord, by what signification the spirit itself pleaseth; that so you in all things may stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, not being brought under the power of any thing, but, every one, without respect of persons,
using

using your own liberty unto edification, minding always the preservation of unity in the body, more than your own particular ease and benefit, avoiding singularity in any thing, except by a positive command, lest division or separation follow.

Let not your ears be open unto every word that is spoken, lest dislike or prejudice enter; but mind the life more than words, that your unity may stand in the spirit that speaks, and not in the words that are spoken; lest the affections be tickled, and a love and unity arise from thence, whereby a false fellowship will be begotten, and held in outward observance, like the world, and so will gifts and persons come to be set up, and death and formality increase; but the mystery of the fellowship in the spirit and life will decay, and so form and power will clash, and discord soon enter; and the wisdom of the brain, in the abundance of knowledge, will set up a judgment against the tasting palate, and inward feeling by the power; and so may the power come to be lost, or much abated, because its way of overcoming is rather by suffering, than open contest; which hitherto hath been the cause that so few have been on its side in ages past, the greater part going still the other way; but by your keeping in the savory spirit, you will try and judge all words, and the spirits also from whence they proceed, to the keeping out of all distempers.

Let there be no whisperings among you, nor that nourished, which delights to hear or bear tales; but every one minding their own measures, which neither doth nor thinketh any evil, but judgeth that as a seed sown to cause the flesh's strength to increase: for as that evil seed is hearkened unto, it will beget a fellowship in the prejudiced part, unto the cooling of love, and nourishing of iniquity,
whereby

whereby it will secretly spread itself, to the poisoning of the tongue with private smitings, and also mis-spending of precious opportunities in unprofitable discourses, unto the burdening of the true seed.

Let no harshness to, nor judging of one another be found among you; for your mother, that brought you forth, is free from all these things, swallowing up, and covering all, as the sea the earth, by infinite depths lower than all, and unmeasurable heights above all; so that all is cleansed through it, and compassed round by it on every side, that nothing but perfect love and purity may appear, the multitude of evils being covered by it; so that though they be sought for, yet they shall not be found. And therefore let it appear you are her children, by passing by, and covering all with that mantle which yourselves were once swaddled in, and to this day are kept warm by. But if any thing that is evil spring up in the garden, let it be soon weeded out by the care of the owner: but when thou seest it either in thy own, or neighbour's garden, let not anger nor fretting boil in thee against it, but wait for skill and power to pluck it up, without hurt to the walks or pleasant flowers: do it not in haste or wrath, lest thou nip the top only, leaving the root in the ground to spread more, and do greater mischief; and so shalt thou in wisdom keep the garden clean, thy duty discharged unto thy neighbour, and thy brother saved from the spight of the enemy; and thou shalt shine, because thou hast saved him from the error of his way.

Let anger and distaste be far from thee, not having any place in thy heart: " Let not the sun go down
 " in thy wrath; but when thou rememberest thy
 " brother hath ought against thee, leave thy gift
 " at the altar, and go thy way and be first reconciled to thy brother, and then offer thy gift
 " upon

“ upon God’s altar;” and so shalt thou meet with acceptance from him, and thy soul be preserved in his peace, and thou kept in unity with thy brethren.

Let not an accusation be received against an elder, without two or three witnesses, that so it may established to be true; and then in love, and bowels of meekness and tender compassion, let him know of it privately, that he may be reclaimed, and the body preserved pure, unto the praise of God; and so will all things be done decently and in order, and the Lord God of life and power, will appear amongst you in power and great glory, setting up his mercy seat over you, and the cherubims stretching forth their wings, and covering their faces, because of his presence: and here will be found the substance of all figures, the pot with manna, and the ark of the testament, with the rod that budded, and the monuments of his mercy and goodness will be brought into remembrance by the spirit of truth, and this glory of the latter house far exceed the former, unto the praise of his everlasting mercy and goodness for ever.

For this is the Message which I am to signify unto you, in the Name of the Lord God of Hosts, and in his Fear I deliver it.

Thus saith the Lord God of Hosts: I have seen, I have seen the afflictions of the afflicted, and their cry is come in remembrance before me; and I will awake as a man of war, and come forth as a giant refreshed with wine, to finish my determinations, and to execute mine own decrees; and in righteousness and judgment will I do it, saith the Lord God. I will plead with all the rebellious inhabitants of the earth, as
with

with fire and sword, to make my power known in their destruction, and to the salvation of my own seed, saith the Lord. I will not leave one lost sheep unfound, nor one lamb unbrought home, nor prisoner in the pit unset free; but I will give commission unto the graves to open, for the dead to arise, and unto the sea, to cast up her slain: for I will deliver, I will deliver the mourners, and set free all the captives, because the day of the everlasting jubilee is come, and the Lord of sabbaths hath heard the cry of the elect, and is risen to plead their cause, and to execute judgment on their behalf, and to clear their innocency before all people. For I will not leave one of them under the power of the adversary: for my decree is to break all bonds, and to snap all chains asunder, and to suffer no bounds nor limits to be unto my love; for they shall know the largeness, sweetness, and everlastingness of it: like a sea shall it be unto them, to overflow all banks, and cover all mountains and hills, and to fill them with the knowledge of my life and presence, as the waters cover the sea. I will, I will, saith the Lord God, make the nations know, that I have loved them, and that they are a people saved by the Lord, and the glory of all nations, and the blessing of all lands. "Therefore let no straitness be upon you, nor gall of bitterness in you: for this is the message that I am to deliver unto you from the Lord of Hosts, the God of your salvation," viz. That your God hath looked upon you with everlasting mercy, and upon your scattered brethren and sisters, the royal seed of Abraham, that are hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and will deliver them all, and rend all mountains that lie in their way, and cleave all rocks of opposition against me, divide all waters that separate from me, saith the Lord of Hosts, that my ransomed may pass; and this will I do

I do both within and without them: for what I will do in them, shall be as an earnest and pledge of what I will do without them. Within them shall not be any root of bitterness, or other evil thing, but I will destroy it, saith the Lord God: within them shall lodge no ravenous beast, nor devouring bird, nor any evil surmising one against another, nor any envying shall be found amongst them; but they shall be all righteous, and the everlasting gates shall open at the word of my command, and they, the righteous nation, shall enter into mine unlimited glory, and boundless everlasting loving-kindness, in the free covenant of life in Christ Jesus, that I may rejoice over them to do them good for ever.

And without them shall not be an oppressor found to hurt them, nor any destroyer upon all my holy mount, saith the Lord God: for I will rid the earth of the briars and thorns, and burn up the straw and stubble, and consume all the workers of iniquity, that my blessings may come upon my people unto the uttermost; that all nations, bond and free, may hear of my marvellous works, and be astonished, and all my children comforted together one in another, and in me, saith the Lord God, for ever: for I will fill, I will fill their hearts and their meetings with my glory, that they, as the sons of the morning, may sing together, and the voice of melody and gladness may be in them and amongst them, to the ravishing of their hearts, and astonishing of all that behold them; for Jerusalem shall be a praise, and Zion a rejoicing unto the ends of the earth.

Therefore lift up your heads, and put on thy strength, O thou city of the living God: for thy walls shall be salvation, and thy gates praise; no complaining shall be in thy streets, nor beggar in all thy

thy land; and strife and debate shall for ever be
banished out of thy dwellings; and peace and
plenty, love and unity, shall be the motto upon
your houses; and the Omnipotent One, the Lord
of Hosts, thy husband, thy Lord, and thy God
for ever.

From Aylesbury common, gaol
the 19th day of the 7th
Month, 1661.

J. CROOK.

AN

AN
E P I S T L E
TO THE
CHILDREN OF THE LORD.

Dear Children of the Lord,

GREAT hath been the love, with which the Father of mercies hath visited you, when you were fallen into the hands of your enemies, who had wounded you, and bruised you, so that there was no soundness in you; and in that state you lay, and none was able to comfort you, or to bind up your wounds; the priest and the Levite passed by, as void of compassion, and as physicians of no value, until the good Samaritan came, whose bowels were opened, and whose own compassions reached unto you, so that oil was poured into your wounds, and a place of entertainment provided, and refreshment was received by you, to the comforting of your souls in your weary and wounded estate. Oh my friends! Do you not remember it? And can you not tell what God hath done for you, and when he did it? And how seasonable and suitable it was unto you, in the day of your misery? And how welcome, and with what acceptance and thankfulness did you receive it? Was any either able or worthy, in heaven or earth, to help you, besides him? And if he had not freely succoured you in your distress, had you not perished in your blood? Oh!

Oh! Why should his mercy be forgotten, or his love slip out of remembrance for ever? Surely he did it that he might be feared, and that he might be praised; and that a birth might be born, that cannot nor will not forget his goodness, nor give the glory of his doings unto another, but unto him for ever unto whom it belongs: and in this birth is your safety, and in this birth is your peace and quietness for ever: do not, Oh! do not let the false birth be painted with the openings that belongs unto the true, nor the true want the food that is proper for it: nor let not the earthly selfish birth, be covered or clothed with the profession of the true and heavenly birth, while the immortal is covered with rags, and with death and darkness, and is kept prisoner in the pit, and captive in the dungeon of falsehood, and fleshly reasonings; locked with chains of fears, and doubts, and cares for self-safety, while there is a cry for want of bread, and a famine in your hearts; and while the earthly and fleshly part is fed with dainties, and fares deliciously every day, with the knowledge and remembrance of what was once enjoyed, but now is departed from, and barrenness and coldness is come over again; and yet there is a mind that will not take notice of it, nor believe it, but sits as queen, notwithstanding, all that was once honourable, is lost and forsaken, and the selfhood, and earthly spirit, is gotten up, and would rule, where once the pure and holy spirit ruled: Oh! take heed of this usurper, for it is but one of Babylon's children, and happy shall he be that dashes it against the stones; for the Lord God is making the House of Jacob to be as a flame, and the house of Esau to be as stubble, and Jerusalem to be as a burdensome stone unto all nations: therefore all you that have seen the wonders of the Lord, and
have

have beheld his marvellous doings ; and have been patients unto the true and everlasting phyfician, upon whom he hath experienced his fkill, and manifested his love, and that you for ever might found out his praife, and procure many to inquire after him who heals without money, and gives all freely, and expects nothing but returns of praife and obedience in the ftrength of what he hath given. Oh ! do not fo requite the Lord, as to forget his mercies, or to flight what he hath done for you in times paff; neither let the ungrateful, and difingenuous fpirit, prevail again over you, left your bondage be greater than before, and the enemy come in like a flood, and like the breaking forth of waters, and overflow the banks of temperance and moderation, and your excefs prove greater, and your folly more remarkable, than before you knew the Lord, and the power of his word ; for the enemy comes not but to fteal and to rob, and he begins in craft, and great fubtilty, that fo he may not be fufpected ; and his art is, in covering his bate, that his intended mischief may not appear ; but that it may be fwallowed down without fufpicion, that he may have the greater hold ; he begins with a fmall matter, and ends with a greater. Oh my dear friends ! believe him not, for he was a liar from the beginning ; and he will beguile you as he did Eve, if you watch not ; he will tell you, that you may take care for your families, and fo bring in diftruff of God upon you : he will tell you, that you muft be as wife as ferpents, and fo will bring in flefhly wifdom and devilifh fubtilty upon you : he will tell you, you muft not give offence neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor the church of God, and fo will bring in refpect of perfons, and finful compliances upon you : he will tell you, that you muft love enemies, and fo will bring coldnefs upon

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you,

you, to quench your zeal for God, in reprov-
ing of iniquity, and bearing a testimony for God against
it: he will tell you, as he did Eve, you must feed
upon the knowledge of this thing, and the other
thing, and by your knowing what is good, and
what is evil, you shall be like God, when it is the
way to make you like him, who knows God's will,
but is out of the power that enables to obey. And
so will he paint over his wiles, that by his begin-
ning with a little, he may afterwards bring to more,
and so will weakness, and coldness, and hardness,
and stiffness, increase and come upon you, like gray
hairs here and there, and you know it not, but will
grow most in a secret benumbing and insensibility,
ness, and the other evils will follow, and be pleaded
for, and prejudice arise and grow, against all others
who are not in the same, and who testify against
them; and so the love will abate, and evil surmis-
ing spring; and that which should bear reproof,
and receive information, is pressed and loaded, and
burdens will grow, and the unity with the faithful
will be lost, and the latter end be worse than the
beginning: therefore watch, my dear friends, against
the enemy of your souls, that you may be preserved
out of all his snares, and that the holy seed may
grow, and you, in the love and unity, may be pre-
served, faithful, bold, and valiant, in your answer-
ing of God's requiring in all things, unto his praise
and glory for ever; that the blessings of Abraham
may be enjoyed, and your peace with God may
abound, and love, one unto another; and with all
his children, shining through, and manifesting itself
in your diligent coming together to worship God,
and faithful keeping of your meetings, out of the
fear of men, in the fear of God, unto his praise, and
sweet refreshing of one another; and so will you de-
light to meet together, and the joy of the Lord will
be

be your strength, and you thereby encouraged to wait upon him, and his sweet and precious presence will be manifest amongst you, unto the building up and strengthening one another in the faith of the gospel, unto the vanquishing of your fears, and scattering of all your enemies, so that you will not be bowed down under any of your enemies, but be delivered out of all their hands, that you may serve the Lord your God without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of your lives, unto the praise of the glory of his goodness and mercy that endures for ever.

So in the love of God, and peace one with another, dwell, and judge all with the light of Jesus Christ, that genders unto bondage, or that would lead you unto the self-safety or fleshly ease, out of the daily cross; but love the cross of Christ, and delight in the yoke, that all may be slain and crucified, that oppresseth the seed of God: so shall your hearts be kept open unto God, and you sensible of his heavenly dew, and the showers of his blessings to water your hearts, that green and fresh you may be kept, as a garden, and the beloved walking in the midst of you, and you all comforted by his living presence in your hearts, unto the endless praise of his mercy for ever. My God keep you all in his life, fear, and love, unto the end. Amen.

From my outward bonds for the
testimony of Jesus, in the com-
mon gaol in Aylesbury, the
16th of the 7th month, 1661.

J. CROOK.

A N O T H E R
E P I S T L E
T O T H E
C H I L D R E N O F T H E L O R D .

Dear Friends and Children of the Lord,

MY dear love is with you, and my life is refreshed, when you are in my remembrance by the spirit of my God, because of your steadfastness in his truth, and valour for his name; and as often I have been refreshed amongst you, when I have been present with you, even so now are my bonds sweetened to me by the remembrance of you in the Lord. Oh! I cannot forget, how sweet his presence hath been unto us many a time in our meetings together: for surely it is never to be forgotten; and sooner let our right hands forget their cunning, and our tongues cleave to the roofs of our mouths, and the sucking babe forget the breast that nourished it, than that we should forget the goodness of the Lord our God, or suffer the remembrance of his manifold mercies and often deliverances, which he hath wrought for us in the deeps; and the sands and the rocks, which he hath again and again saved us from falling into, and splitting upon, to be forgotten by us. Oh! are not the wonders that he hath wrought, exceeding admirable? And his preservations from time to time, inexpressible and innumerable? Who is a God like

like unto him! Or where is he to be found, that can rescue out of his hand? Is not his salvation as walls and bulwarks, and his pure and holy name as an invincible castle, and his mighty arm as a wall of brass about the dwellings of Zion? For how hath he chosen her to be the delight of his heart, and the spouse of his bosom, from whom he will not withhold the thing that is good, but will delight her with his riches, and clothe her with his ornaments, and feed her with the finest of the flour, and glad her heart with the wine of the kingdom, and be with her at her goings out and comings in, that she may be known to be the spouse of the mighty God, and the beloved one of the Lord; that kings may be in love with her beauty, and the mighty be astonished because of her glory, and of the blessings which night and day attend her; that she may never more be termed desolate or forsaken; for the Lord himself, the Holy One of Israel, will tabernacle with her throughout all generations; and the children that are yet unborn, shall call her blessed. This is that Zion, that hath been as a wife of youth forsaken, whom none hath regarded, but hath been mourning in the state of her widowhood for want of her beloved; for there was none besides him, in whom she could take delight, during the time of his absence, which she thought long, being restless in every condition, because he was wanting whom her soul loved; and she could not but inquire after him, though she met with stripes from the watchmen, and frowns from those that wondered what her beloved was more than theirs, that she was so restless in her inquiries, and eager in her pursuit after him, as if he were not to be matched, nor none among all the sons of Adam to be compared to him; so inquisitive, solicitous, and laborious after

him was she, that if possible at last she might find him, whose presence would make up all. O ye children of the Lord! Can ye not read me here? Do ye not know right well the thing that I say? Since you have found him, have not your sorrows fled away! And is not your joy now complete, not repenting you of your former pain, hardships, and difficulties, which you have undergone to find him? Are not your souls now satisfied in the enjoyment of him? And have ye not cast up, and is it not easily accounted now, that whatever your further sufferings may be, because of your following of him, and love to him, yet all is not to be compared to the sweetness of his presence, and inestimableness of his worth, whose price is beyond rubies, and the enjoyment of whose company is beyond the fine gold, and the sweetness of it far exceeding the honey or honeycomb? And this I need not tell you, Oh you faithful ones! For you know it right well; therefore let your delight be in him, and your whole life streaming into him, that you may be one lump with him, never more to be parted; but whatever would separate or eclipse, either within or without, let it come to judgment, that he may be an everlasting covenant unto you all, in whom the strength of the Father's love may run towards you, and may be continually amongst you, as the breaking forth of mighty waters drowning all the unbelief of your hearts, with whatever else may beset you either outwardly or inwardly. For you may easily know your beloved from all likenesses of him, either in heaven or earth, because he is without spot or blemish, neither is there any wrinkle in his face, nor seam in his garment, but he is all lovely; neither dwells in his breast one thought of evil towards you, or dislike against you, either because of any thing,

thing, that in times past you have done against him, or because of any thing that the enemy can lay to your charge, or beset you on every side withal; for he will scatter all with the brightness of his glory. And though the moon should cease to give light, and the sun its shining, yet shall the covenant of the Father's love in him never change, nor come to an end. Therefore let your souls delight themselves in fulness, and let no straitness nor barrenness be in you, or upon you, but drink ye, Oh! drink ye into his life, and be ye filled with his virtue: for the good, which he is determined to do unto and for his people, shall none hinder. And therefore in vain do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine, and the councils of the earth conspire; for Zion must go free, and Babylon must go down, and her fall must be great and sudden, and none shall be able to hinder it.

And this is the word of the Lord God to you, and to all the inhabitants of the earth, who shall bewail her downfall; but ye shall rejoice, with all my Father's children, begotten of his love, and brought forth by the arm of his power, and by it strengthened to stand in the evil day, and to have your mouths open, and your hearts enlarged, to sound out his praise with all the followers of the Lamb, in whose work and service it is honour enough to be employed. For where he is, and when he comes, his reward is still with him.

Therefore in his love I leave you all, and commend you to his faithfulness, who comes to do the Father's will (in you all) in which I am found, in my place, with the rest of my suffering brethren with me, and elsewhere, who remains a lover of all your souls, and a rejoicer in your

joy and unity; praying, that it may be perfected daily, and continue to the end. Amen.

Your dear friend and brother in the truth of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, with my dear love to all the faithful in Hertford and Baldock, and thereaway.

J. CROOK.

From Aylebury common gaol, this
4th day of the tenth month, 1661,
where I remain in outward bonds
for the testimony of Jesus.

A N

(A N)
A P O L O G Y
F O R T H E
Q U A K E R S :

WHEREIN IS SHEWED,

*How they answer the Chief Principles of the Law;
and Main Ends of Government : with several Rea-
sons, why they deserve the Liberty of their Consciences
in the Worship of God : for all the Magistrates and
Rulers to consider of, lest they pervert Justice, and
provoke the Lord to Displeasure.*

THIS people hath been every where spoken
against, as those that turn the world upside
down, and are different in life and manners from
the people of the nations : But time and experi-
ence hath made many to know them better, for
they begin to be understood, and only to be hardly
thought of in those places, and by those persons
that know them not ; it being always incident to
man, to speak evil of things he knows not, because
he cannot endure to have any to outshine, or go be-
yond his knowledge ; and therefore what he wants
in worth and virtue, he strives to make up by force
and wrath ; though thereby he can never work the
righteousness of God. But as Cain thought to get
up by removing Abel out of the way, and to esta-
blish his form, by taking away his life that was in
the power ; so have all done ever since that have
gone

gone in the way of Cain: and yet, though Abel was killed, Cain could not enter into God's favour, while sin lay at his door; for, form without power, will never be accepted with God, however it may be cried up by men.

This people's principles are now well known; and the more, because they have been so much opposed, and often tried, even from the mitre-cap unto the curate's coat; besides the lashes by the way from standers-by and lookers-on, as well as from those that esteem themselves unquestionably orthodox in their judgments and practices: yet have this people stood, when many have fallen; and by their trials, both their principles and practices come to shine the more, and the better to be approved; as if to them to die were gain, and to live were Christ.

That this people deserve to have the liberty of their consciences, to worship God according to his persuation in their hearts, may appear by what hereafter follows.

First, Because of their principle, which is light, and that leads them to do unto all men as they would be done unto. And this principle and grace, they affirm, appears unto all men, though few follow it; yet is it every man's duty to be subject unto its requirings: and those that are faithful to it, it keeps them in all trials; whereby they are upheld, when others fall.

Secondly, Because of their practices, being such as become the gospel; not vain talkers, like many others, but holy livers; not hearers only, but doers, their words being laws unto them, proceeding not from a vain customary form, but from a considerate and ponderous spirit, first weighed, and then spoken forth: and such words never become a burden to the speakers of them, though hard to be digested by

by an unfavoury mind in the hearers. But their practices are so well known, that fairs and markets proclaim them, as well as shops and trades; besides the experiences of landlords from their tenants, as well as relations both near and more remote, with their demeanor both in sickness and health, poverty and riches, liberty and restraint, without murmuring at the hand which strikes. I need say no more to manifest the practices of the faithful, they being known from the hoary head unto the youthful days, and from the chiefest ruler unto the meanest subject; it being all one to them, with whom they have to do, either child or experienced age; righteousness being the girdle of their loins, and truth and uprightness the square and line of all their actions.

Thirdly, They deserve liberty, because of their faithful testimony against the wickedness, injustice, oppressions and cruelties of the persons, places, and times, in and among whom they have lived, even ever since they have been a people unto this day, though hitherto they have deeply suffered for the same, as the righteous have always done, who, by departing from iniquity, and bearing witness against it in whomsoever it appeared, made themselves a prey.

Fourthly, If liberty should be denied them, experience teacheth, that they will meet to worship God, which argues, that both their faith and constancy comes from him, unless hindered by banishment, death, or imprisonment: and experience sheweth, by what of this kind hath already been exercised towards them, how their number is increased, and a spirit of pity and compassion is raised up in the hearts of people towards them. Besides, their usefulness in the commonwealth, they being known to be both laborious themselves, and encouragers

encouragers of others thereunto, may be another reason why they deserve liberty. For may it not well be supposed, that the denying of liberty of conscience unto Quakers and others, is one cause why trade is so decayed, and discontents increased? And can that place or country be long-lived, where trade decays; trade being unto a kingdom or country, as meat is unto the stomach? And what danger England is in, upon this account, it concerns the rulers to look unto, before the disease be incurable.

Fifthly, They deserve liberty, because they both answer the principles of the law, and the ends of government.

The main principles of the law are these three, *Honeste vivere; Tribuere suum cuique; Neminem lædere*: i. e. To live well; To pay every man his own; and to hurt no man.

For their living well, it is manifest unto all that know them, and have to do with them; of which, I have spoken before: and therefore the law is abused, when liberty is given to crows, and doves punished.

Dat veniam Corvis, vexat censura Columbas. Juven.

And this practice doth make laws like spiders webs

*That catch the flies, but let the wasps go free;
Favours the ill, when just imprison'd be.*

For their paying to every man his own, let landlords speak for their tenants, and masters and servants each for other; with all others, with whom they deal, or have to do.

For their hurting no man, it is as manifest, in that they are hurt by all; and the more, because they follow Christ's example, when they are reviled,
not

not to revile again: and therefore can they not be justly charged unto this day with hurting any, either in their persons, estates, or liberties; though many have watched for their halting.

The chief ends of government are these four:

1st, To prevent oppressions; to limit and restrain the excessive power and violence of great men; to open the passages of justice, with indifferency towards all.

2dly, To preserve men in their estates, and secure them in their lives and liberties: for if it were not for just government, no man would have more certainty in his own, than power will allow.

3dly, That virtue should be cherished, and vice suppressed.

4thly, That all accidents and events, all counsels and designs, should be improved to the publick good.

All these ends are manifestly answered by the lives and practices of the Quakers: for they do not oppress, nor defraud, nor cherish vice; but do good unto all, their principle leading them to do to all as they would be done unto. And therefore they do the magistrates work for them, in giving good example, both in life and doctrine, unto all people with whom they converse; whereby the magistrates work is done to their hands. And therefore in justice they ought to have liberty of conscience, the ends of government being answered by them, both in doctrine and practice; while the generality of people are either oppressors, or by their greatness and violence do stop the passages of justice, or do wrongfully take away the estates
and

and liberties, and sometimes the lives of others: or that do cherish vice, and suppress virtue; and it is the end and design of many, to improve all accidents and events, counsels and contrivances, to a selfish interest, and not to the publick good: all which increase the magistrate's work, that rules for God, and lays more burdens upon his back, as well as they employ his hand to draw the sword, if he bear it not in vain: all which is spared by the Quakers, and those that walk by their principle and example. But contrariwise, *vertus*, as well as *veritas*, odium parit; virtuous lives often gain prisons, when vice hath liberty. And this is made good in our day, *probitas laudatur et alget*; honesty is praised by most, but practised by few.

By what hath been said, it may be seen, how the Quakers do answer the ends of government; and therefore may justly challenge the liberty of their consciences, to worship God according to his persuasions in their hearts.

Therefore all magistrates and rulers are to consider, with whom prisons are or have lately been filled: Is it with those that live dishonestly, contrary to law; or honest livers, that answer the law? Are hurters of men in prison, or at liberty in taverns, ale-houses and play-houses? Let equity speak. Have you been as willing to turn honest livers, and those that answer the ends of government, out of prison upon the king's late declaration, as you were to put them in upon his proclamation before? Are you as indifferent in the Quakers cases, when they come before you, and willing to do them justice, and release them, as drunkards, swearers, and others that come before you at your courts and sessions? If so, what means the lowing of the oxen, and bleating of the sheep, whom,

whom, as appointed for the slaughter, many of you fine and imprison at pleasure, without any legal trial by juries of the neighbourhood, which by your oaths, according to law, you ought to do? Nay, do not many magistrates now, as Israel did in those days, when there was no king in Israel, every man what is right in his own eyes, as to this people? If he will be moderate, he may; and if he will not, he may choose: as if the time were come, that he who is filthy, may be filthy still; but he who is holy, must be holy no longer. O examine, examine, whether it be not so, or no: if true, how will you account for these things? Or have you a belief, that God sees not, and therefore say in your hearts, No evil shall come unto us? What, doth God take care for oxen, and you, who ought to be his ministers, to encourage them that do well, and punish evil-doers, take no care of his people? Is it not true in this our day, that Lazarus finds more favour from the dogs, than from Dives, that is clad with scarlet, clothed with purple? What, are men become beasts, and beasts men? doth the common people every where cry for liberty? and are their bowels opened with compassions unto the suffering innocent people of God? And are your bowels locked and closed, who should be as nursing fathers, and nursing mothers, to the true children? But instead thereof, beat them as vagrants, and commit them to prison, as the chiefest offenders, only for exercising their consciences towards their father, who sees in secret, and will reward them openly; though others, that should be as fathers, are without natural affection unto them. Can these things go unpunished, or pass without controul, before God's judgment seat? Nay sure: though

——— *Crimina raris*
Librat in antithesis, doctas posuisse figuras
Laudatur———

He crimes doth cloak with learned figures veil,
 And gets renown by turning thus the scale.

As Juvenal complain'd of his day.

Yet rhetorick will not cover vice, when God sits
 judge.

Therefore, O ye rulers and magistrates! take heed what ye do; for God's people are as the apple of his eye, and he that hurteth them, God feels the stroke. And if he punished them that wagged the head, and cried Aha, in the days past; how shall you escape, that give them up to be killed all the day long, and make them as the butts for the arrows of your displeasure to be shot against; although they are such as both answer the principles of the law, and ends of just government, as before is shewed? Oh! let them have liberty therefore, and lay the sword upon the evil doers, that justice may flourish, and the king's throne be established in righteousness, before he comes, that shall come, and will not tarry; from whose presence no rock nor mountain, cave nor den, shall be able to hide you; but then they, whom you now oppress and persecute, shall have their cause pleaded by him, and receive justice from him, and they shall ascend in triumph, power, and great glory, in the sight and view of their enemies: even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

Four

FOUR QUERIES CONCERNING GOVERNMENT.

1st, Whether the magistrates in all nations, do not hold their authority and power over their subjects under God, the supreme Lord of all?

2dly, Whether God hath not authority over every man? And whether his authority and power be not greater than the power and authority of men one over another?

3dly, Whether the magistrates, commanding any thing contrary to what God commands in the heart, keep the true bounds of government, and exercise their authority in true understanding and righteousness? Or whether in so doing, they do not err in judgment, and misguide the reins of government?

4thly, Whether the governments of this present world are so managed, as that God may also govern the hearts of men according to his will and pleasure? Or whether they are so managed, as to interrupt the laws and power of God's spirit in the conscience?

Surely man was made by God, and the place of the highest is under God; and their government should be in his wisdom and righteousness, that God might have respect and authority in the hearts of men, and exercise the government of his Spirit therein, with the encouragement, and not with the contradiction of the outward authority: which might easily be in all governments, were the principle of reason subordinate, and subjected to the principle of life; and did not take upon it to govern without or against it: this would set all straight, both in the governors and in the governed. And this is my prayer to God, that God would spare men, but strike through principles and spirits; that righteousness might be brought forth, and the image of

L

God

God exalted in man, and unrighteousness subdued and subjected: for alas, unrighteousness and cruelty is uncomely in man, and makes even those miserable, who seem most to thrive and prosper by it. O that these things might be considered and weighed in an equal balance! For why should man strive against the will of his Maker, who is too strong for him? As all that have contended with him, have afterwards been forced to acknowledge.

THE

T H E
C R Y O F T H E I N N O C E N T
F O R
J U S T I C E:
B E I N G

A Relation of the Trial of JOHN CROOK, and others, at the General Sessions, held in the Old Bailey, London; beginning the 25th day of the Fourth Month, called June, in the Year 1662; before the Lord Mayor of the City of London, and Recorder of the same, Chief Justice Forster, and divers other Judges and Justices of the Peace, so called.

Published for no other end but to prevent Mistakes, and to satisfy all Moderate Enquirers, concerning the Dealings and Usages that the said J. C. and others met withal, from the beginning of the said Trials to the end.

Alitur vitium, vivitque tegendo.

Eccles. v. 8. *If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of Judgment and Justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest, regardeth; and there be higher than they.*

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M^DC^CX^C.

(A N)

E P I S T L E

T O A L L

M O D E R A T E R E A D E R S .

MANY and great, in all ages unto this day, have been the afflictions, trials, and oppressions of the righteous, as have been foretold by the holy prophets, Christ, and his apostles, since the world began; yet God hath not left himself without witness, both in preserving some in all ages to testify against the idolatries and oppressions of the days and times in which they lived; as also of his judicial appearances to punish the unjust and merciless imposers on mens consciences, because of their worshipping of God; for about that the first quarrel began, witness the serpent tempting from the observance of God's command, which he could not do by flat and plain denial, because of the positiveness of God's command to man, saying, "Thou shalt not eat of the tree of knowledge," &c. therefore he did it by interpreting or expounding of that command, saying, "It is because God knoweth, that by eating thereof you shall be like him, knowing good and evil:" and by this interpretation or meaning of the devil, who was the first that ever put meanings to God's words, man was deceived, and thus was transgression brought in, and by the same means hath continued unto this day in the world; for as it was, so it is; God said to man, "Thou shalt not;"

but the deceiving spirit saith, That is not intended as it was spoken, for it hath a meaning, &c. And soon after Cain, the Devil's successor in murder and lying, falls upon righteous Abel, for no other cause than the worshipping of God according to his conscience, in the faith and power of God, which was not consistent with Cain's hypocrisy and formality. And thus the quarrel first began about religion, whether power or form should bear sway; and by religion it shall end: and therefore blessed are they for ever who are found faithful unto death, for they shall have the crown of life: for sincerity shall prevail over hypocrisy, and the power against all idolatry and formality; for the Lord hath spoken it.

And as holy writ furnisheth us with examples in this matter, both as to witnesses that have stood for God, against the imposers on the conscience, as Daniel, the three children, Christ himself, and his apostles, with other clouds of witnesses; and also of his righteous judgments upon the oppressors and imposers, as the curse upon the serpent, and the plagues upon Pharaoh, and the brand upon Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin by his imposing; with many more that might be named.

So our histories and laws are not without precedents in this case also; witness the Book of Martyrs which testifies of the sufferings of the martyrs, how that they, as the apostles did, suffered for bearing witness against, not only unrighteous persons, but unrighteous laws also: for the laws of the kingdoms and nations, in which they suffered, as well in England under the Christian Governors, so called, as in other parts, did require those things, or some of them, the denial of which, was the cause of their sufferings then, as it is of us now; and may be seen at large in those books, from whence came the name
Protestant,

Protestant, because they were witnesses against the unrighteousness and idolatrousness of the times in which they lived, notwithstanding any laws that were to the contrary; and as tokens of God's displeasure against these things, many eminent judgments fell suddenly upon the persecutors, as some by sudden death were taken away, others by bursting afunder, their bowels falling out in a wonderful manner, with like violent deaths, which for signal testimonies of God's wrath and fury, did fall upon many, to the astonishing of the beholders in those days.

And our law books furnish us with several acts of justice that were executed upon unjust judges for their not keeping unto the laws and rules of justice, made and appointed both for the peoples safety, and them to act by; as may be seen in King Alfred's time, mentioned in the Mirror of Justice, where it is recorded, that forty-four judges, or justices, were hanged in one year for their injustice, whose crimes may be seen, as set down in the said book.

And the Lord Coke, so called, Institutes, part 3. cap. 2. p. 23. saith thus, What damnable and damned opinions those were concerning high treason, of Tresilian chief justice of the king's bench, Sir Robert Belknap chief justice of the common bench, and others of their fellows; and of John Lockton, one of the king's serjeants, &c. But, saith Coke, more detestable were the opinions of the justices in the 21 Rich. II. and of Hankford and Brinchley, the king's serjeants, &c. These justices and serjeants were called in question afterwards in the parliament holden 1 Hen. 4. for their said opinions, answered, as divers lords spiritual and temporal did, That they durst no otherwise do for fear of death: yet were these two chief justices, and the rest aforesaid, attainted, for that it was, as the parliament

affirmed, for the great honour and common profit of the realm.

And remarkable is that history, which tells us of a corrupt judge, who was commanded to have his skin taken off, and to be made as a carpet or covering, and to be in the view or sight of the judgment seat, to remain as a terror to all unjust judges.

These, with many more examples, are recorded in our law books, and elsewhere, as monuments of justice against those that caused injustice thus to be acted; and of terror unto all corrupt judges, for the future to be afraid of the like injustice. See Walter Rawleigh's History of the World, lib. 3. chap. 4.

J. CROOK.

THE

THE
CRY OF THE INNOCENT
FOR
JUSTICE.

I HAVE here collected the proceedings of the now present chief justice of the king's bench, with others of his brethren, occasioned by a late trial before them at the publick sessions for the peace and gaol-delivery, holden in the Old Bailey, begun the 25th of the fourth month, called June; the Lord Mayor of the city of London and sheriffs, with divers justices and aldermen then present, viz.

Silence being made, the chief judge commanded the crier of the court to call one of the prisoners to the bar, who was brought thither accordingly out of the bail dock from amongst the felons and murderers.

Chief Judge. What meeting was that you were at?

Prisoner. I desire to be heard: Where is mine accuser? For I expect the issue will be brought forth, having been thus long in prison.

C. Judge. Your tongue is not your own, and you must not have liberty to speak what you list.

Prisoner. I speak in the presence and fear of the everlasting God, that my tongue is not my own, for it is the Lord's, and to be disposed of according to his pleasure, and not to speak my own words; and
therefore

therefore I desire to be heard : I have been so long in prison. Then he was interrupted by the judge.

Judge. Leave your canting. And commanded him to be taken away, which he was accordingly by the gaoler. This was the substance of what the prisoner aforesaid spoke the first time.

C. Judge. Call John Crook to the bar ; which the crier did accordingly, he being amongst the felons as aforesaid.

John Crook being brought to the bar :

C. Judge. When did you take the oath of allegiance ?

J. Crook. I desire to be heard.

C. Judge. Answer to the question, and you shall be heard.

J. Crook. I have been about six weeks in prison, and am I now called to accuse myself ? For the answering to this question in the negative, is to accuse myself, which you ought not to put me upon ; for, *nemo debet seipsum prodere*. I am an Englishman, and by the law of England I ought not to be taken, nor imprisoned, nor disseized of my freehold, nor called in question, nor put to answer, but according to the law of the land ; which I challenge as my birthright, on my own behalf, and all that hear me this day, (or words to this purpose.) I stand here at this bar as a delinquent, and do desire that my accuser may be brought forth to accuse me for my delinquency, and then I shall answer to my charge, if any I be guilty of.

C. Judge. You are here demanded to take the oath of allegiance, and when you have done that, then you shall be heard about the other ; for we have power to tender it to any man.

J. C. Not to me upon this occasion, in this place ; for I am brought hither as an offender already, and not to be made an offender here, or to
accuse

accuse myself; for I am an Englishman, as I have said to you, and challenge the benefit of the laws of England; for by them is a better inheritance derived to me as an Englishman, than that which I receive from my parents; for by the former the latter is preserved; and this the 29th ch. of Magna Charta, and the Petition of Right, mentioned in the third of Car. I. and in other good laws of England; and therefore I desire the benefit and observance of them: and you that are judges upon the bench, ought to be my counsel, and not my accusers, but to inform me of the benefit of those laws; and wherein I am ignorant, you ought to inform me, that I may not suffer through my own ignorance of those advantages which the laws of England afford me as an Englishman.

Reader, I here give thee a brief account of my taking and imprisoning, that thou mayest the better judge what justice I had from the court aforesaid; which is as followeth:

I being in John's Street, London, about the 13th day of the third month, called May, with some others of the people of God, to wait upon him, as we were sat together, there came in a rude man, called Miller, with a long cane in his hand, who laid violent hands upon me, with some others, beating some, commanding the constables who came in after him, but having no warrant, were not willing to meddle, but as his threatenings prevailed, they being afraid of him, joined with him to carry several of us before Justice Powel, so called, who the next day sent us to the sessions at Hicks's Hall; where, after some discourse several times with them, manifesting to them the illegality both of our commitment, and their proceedings thereupon; yet notwithstanding, they committed me and others, and caused an indictment to be drawn against us, found-
ed

ed upon the late act against Quakers and others, and then remanded us to New Prison, where we continued for some days, and then removed us to Newgate, where we remained until the sessions in the Old Bailey aforesaid: whereby thou mayest understand what justice I met withal, by what went before, and now farther follows.

Chief Judge. We sit here to do justice, and are upon our oaths; and we are to tell you what is law, and not you us: therefore sirrah you are too bold.

J. Crook. Sirrah is not a word becoming a judge; for I am no felon; neither ought you to menace the prisoner at the bar: for I stand here arraigned as for my life and liberty, and the preservation of my wife and children, and outward estate, they being now at the stake, therefore you ought to hear me to the full, what I can say in my own defence, according to law, and that in its season, as it is given me to speak: therefore I hope the court will bear with me, if I am bold to assert my liberty, as an Englishman, and as a Christian; and if I speak loud, it is my zeal for the truth, and for the name of the Lord; and mine innocency makes me bold.

Judge. It is an evil zeal; interrupting John Crook.

J. C. No, I am bold in the name of the Lord God Almighty, the everlasting Jehovah, to assert the truth, and stand as a witness for it: let my accuser be brought forth, and I am ready to answer any court of justice.

Then the judge interrupted me, saying Sirrah, with some other words I do not remember: but I answered, You are not to threaten me, neither are those menaces fit for the mouth of a judge; for the safety of the prisoner stands upon the indifferency of the court: and you ought not to behave yourselves

selves as parties, seeking all advantages against the prisoner, but not heeding any thing that may make for his clearing or advantage. The judge again interrupted me, saying,

Judge. Sirrah, you are to take the oath, and here we tender it you, (bidding, read it.)

J. C. Let me see mine accuser, that I may know for what cause I have been six weeks imprisoned, and do not put me to accuse myself by asking me questions; but either let my accuser come forth, or otherwise let me be discharged by proclamation, as you ought to do. Here I was interrupted again.

Judge Twisden. We take no notice of your being here otherwise than a straggler, or as any other person, or of the people that are here this day; for we may tender the oath to any man. And another judge spake to the like purpose.

J. C. I am here at your bar as a prisoner restrained of my liberty, and do question whether you ought in justice to tender me the oath on the account I am now brought before you, because I am supposed to be an offender; or else why have I been six weeks in prison already? Let me be cleared of my imprisonment, and then I shall answer to what is charged against me, and to the question now propounded; for I am a lover of justice with all my soul, and am well known by my neighbours, where I have lived, to keep a conscience void of offence, both towards God, and towards man.

Judge. Sirrah, leave your canting.

J. C. Is this canting, to speak the words of the Scripture?

Judge. It is canting in your mouth, though they are Paul's words.

J. C. I speak the words of the Scripture, and it is not canting, though I speak them; but they are words

words of truth and soberness in my mouth, they being witnessed by me, and fulfilled in me.

Judge. We do ask you again, Whether you will take the oath of allegiance? It is but a short question, you may answer it if you will.

J. C. By what law have you power to tender it?

Then, after some consultation together by whispering, they called for the statute book, and turning over the leaves, they answered,

Judge. By the third of King James.

J. C. I desire that statute may be read; for I have consulted it, and do not understand that you have power by that statute to tender me the oath, being here before you in this place, upon this occasion, as a delinquent already; and therefore I desire the judgment of the court in this case, and that the statute may be read.

Judge. Then they took the statute-book, and consulted together upon it, and one said, We are the judges of this land, and do better understand our power than you do, and we do judge we may lawfully do it.

J. C. Is this the judgment of the court?

Judge. Yes.

J. C. I desire the statute to be read that impowers you to tender the oath to me upon this occasion in this place; for, *Vox audita perit, sed littera scripta manet*; therefore let me hear it read.

Judge. Hear me.

J. C. I am as willing to hear as to speak.

Judge. Then hear me: you are here required to take the oath by the court, and I will inform you what the penalty will be, in case you refuse; for your first denial shall be recorded, and then it shall be tendered to you again at the end of the sessions; and upon the second refusal you run a *premunire*, which

which is the forfeiture of all your estate, if you have any, and imprisonment during life.

J. C. It is justice I stand for; let me have justice, in bringing my accuser face to face, as by law you ought to do, I standing at your bar as a delinquent; and when that is done, I will answer to what can be charged against me, as also to the question; until then, I shall give no other answer than I have already done, at least at present.

Then there was a cry in the court, Take him away, which occasioned a great interruption; and J. C. spake to this purpose, saying, Mind the fear of the Lord God, that you may come to the knowledge of his will, and do justice; and take heed of oppressing the innocent, for the Lord God of heaven and earth will assuredly plead their cause: and for my part, I desire not the hurt of one of the hairs of your heads; but let God's wisdom guide you. These words he spake at the bar, and as he was carrying away.

On the sixth day of the week, in the forenoon following, the court being sat, John Crook was called to the bar.

Chief Judge. Friend Crook, we have given you time to consider of what was said yesterday to you by the court, hoping you may have better considered of it by this time; therefore, without any more words, will you take the oath? And called to the clerk, and bid him read it.

J. C. I did not, neither do I deny allegiance, but do desire to know the cause of my so long imprisonment; for, as I said, I stand at your bar as a delinquent, and am brought hither by force, contrary to the law; therefore let me see my accuser, or else free me by proclamation, as I ought to be, if none can accuse me: for the law is grounded upon
right

right reason, and whatsoever is contrary to right reason, is contrary to law; and therefore if no accuser appear, you ought to acquit me first, and then I shall answer, as I have said, if any new matter appear; otherwise it is of force, and that our law abhors, and you ought not to take notice of my so being before you; for what is not legally so, is not so; and therefore I am in the condition, as if I were not before you: and therefore it cannot be supposed, in right reason, that you have now power, at this time, and in this place, legally to tender me the oath.

Judge. Read the oath to him; and so the clerk began to read.

J. C. I desire justice, according to the laws of England; for you ought first to convict me, concerning the cause of my so long imprisonment: for you are to proceed according to laws already made, and not to make laws; for you ought to be ministers of the law.

Judge. You are a faucy and an impudent fellow: Will you tell us what is law, or our duties? Then said he to the clerk, Read on; and when the clerk had done reading,

J. C. said, Read the preface to the act; I say again, read the title and preamble to the act; for titles to laws are *claves legum*, as keys to open the law; for by their titles, laws are understood and known, as men by their faces. Then the judges would have interrupted me, but I said as followeth; If you will not hear me, nor do me justice, I must appeal to the Lord God of heaven and earth, who is judge of quick and dead; before whom we must all appear, to give an account of the deeds done in the body; for he will judge between you and me this day, whether you have done me justice or not.

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These words following, or the like, I spake as going from the bar, being pulled away, viz. Mind the fear of the Lord God, that you may do justice, lest you perish in his wrath. For sometimes the court cried, Pull him away, and then said, Bring him again; and thus they did several times, like men in confusion and disorder.

The same day, in the afternoon, silence being made, John Crook was called to the bar, before the judges and justices aforesaid; the indictment being read, the judge said,

Mr. Crook, you have heard your indictment, what say you? Are you guilty, or not guilty?

J. C. I desire to speak a few words in humility and soberness, in regard my estate and liberty lies at stake, and am like to be a precedent for many more; therefore I hope the court will not deny me right and benefit of the law, as being an Englishman: I have some reason, before I speak any thing to the indictment, to demand and tell you, that I desire to know mine accusers; I have been kept this six weeks in prison, and know not, nor have not seen the faces of them.

Judge. We shall afford you the right of the law, as an Englishman, God forbid you should be denied it; but you must answer first guilty, or not guilty, that so in your trial you may have a fair hearing and pleading; but if you go on as you do, and will not answer guilty, or not guilty, you will run yourself into a *premunire*, and then you lose the benefit of the law, and expose yourself, body and estate, to great hazards; and whatever violence is offered to your person or estate, you are out of the king's protection, and lose the benefit of the law; and all this by your not answering guilty, or not guilty. If you plead not guilty, you may be heard.

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J. C. It

J. C. It is recorded in the statutes of the 28 Edw. 3. & 3. and 42 Edw. 3. & 3. in these words, No man is to be taken, or imprisoned, or be put to answer without presentment before justices, or matter of record, or by due process, or writ original, according to the old law of the land; and if any thing from henceforth be done to the contrary, it shall be void in law, and holden for error. And also in the 25 of Edw. 1, 2. and the 3 Car. 1. and the 29 cap. Mag. Chart. No freeman shall be taken and imprisoned but by the law of the land: These words [the law of the land] are explained by the statute of 37 Edw. 3. 8. to be without due process of law; and if any judgments are given contrary to Mag. Chart. they are void, 25 Edw. 1. 2.

Judge. Mr. Crook, you are out of the way, and do not understand the law; though you adore the statute law so much, yet you do not understand it.

J. C. I would have you tell me the right way.

Judge. Mr. Crook, hear me, you must say guilty, or not guilty; if you plead not guilty, you shall be heard, and know how far the law favours you. And the next thing is, there is no circumstance whatsoever that is the cause of your imprisonment, that you question, but you have, as a subject, your remedies; if you will go this way, and wave other things, and answer guilty, or not guilty; and what the law affords you, you shall have, if you do what the law requires you; or else you will lose the benefit of the law, and be out of the king's protection.

J. C. Observe how the judge would draw me into a snare, viz. By first pleading, guilty or not guilty, and when I have done so, he and his brethren intend suddenly to put me, as an out-lawed person, out of the king's protection; and how then can I have

have remedy for my false imprisonment? Therefore first clear me, or condemn me, from my false imprisonment, while I am in a capacity to have the benefit of the law, and not to out-law me for an offence created by yourselves; and then, to stop my mouth, you tell me, That if I have been wronged, or false imprisoned, I may have my remedy afterwards: this is to trapan me, and contrary to both law and justice, &c.

Judge. You must plead guilty, or not guilty.

J. C. I do desire in humility and meekness to say, I shall not! I dare not betray the honesty of my cause, and the honest ones of this nation, whose liberty I stand for, as well as my own; as I have cause to think I shall, if I plead to the present indictment, before I see the faces of my accusers: for truly, I am not satisfied in my judgment and conscience, that I ought to plead to a created offence by you, before I be first acquitted of the cause of my being brought prisoner to your bar; and therefore it sticks with me to urge this farther, viz. That I may see my accusers. Interruption.

Judge. The errandest thief may say he is not satisfied in his conscience.

J. C. My case is not theirs, yet they have their accusers; and may not I call for mine? And therefore call for them, for you ought to do so; as Christ said to the woman, Woman, where are thine accusers? So you ought to say to me, Man, where are thine accusers? Interrupted.

Judge. Your indictment is your accuser, and the grand jury have found you guilty, because you did not swear: what say you, Mr. Crook, are you guilty, or not guilty? If you will not answer, or what you have said, be taken for your answer, as I told you before, you lose the benefit of the law; and what I tell you, is for your good.

J. C. What is for good, I hope I shall take it so. Judge. If you will not answer, you run yourself into a *premunire*, and you will lose the benefit of the law, and of the king's protection, unless you plead guilty, or not guilty.

J. C. I stand as brought forcibly and violently hither; neither had I been here but by a violent action, and that you should take no notice of it, seems strange to me; and not only so, but that you should hasten me so fast into a course, that I should not be able any ways to help myself, by reason of your hasty and fast proceedings against me, to put me out of the king's protection, and the benefit of all law: Was ever the like known, or heard of, in a court of justice?

Judge. Friend, this is not here in question, whether you are unjustly brought here or not: do you question that by law, but not disable yourself to take advantage by the law; if brought by a wrong hand, you have a plea against them; but you must first answer guilty, or not guilty.

J. C. How can I help myself, when you have outlawed me? Therefore let proclamation be made in the court, That I was brought by force hither, and let me stand cleared by proclamation, as you ought to do; for you are *discernere per legem, quid sit justum*, (to determine by law what is just) and not to do what seems good in your own eyes; (here I was interrupted again) but might have spoken justice Crook's words in Hamden's case, who said, That we who are judges speak upon our oaths, and therefore must deliver our judgments according to our consciences; and the fault will lie upon us, if it be illegal, and we deliver it for law: and farther said, We that are judges must not give our judgments according to policy, or rules of state, nor conveniences, but only according to law. These were

were his words, which I might have spoken, but was interrupted.

Judge. What, though no man tendered the oath to you, when you were committed, as you say, it being now tendered to you; from the time you refused it, being tendered to you by a lawful authority, you refusing, are indicted; we look not upon what you are here for, but here finding you, we tender you the oath; and you refusing it, your imprisonment is now just, and according to law.—

(Something omitted which I spake afterwards.)

J. C. How came I here, if you know not; I have told you it is force and violence, which our law altogether condemns; and therefore I not being legally before, am not before you; for what is not legally so, is not so; and I not being legally brought to your bar, you ought not to take notice of my being here.

Judge. No, no, you are mistaken; so you may say of all the people gazing here, they not being legally here, are not here: I tell you, a man being brought by force hither, we may tender him the oath, and if he take it not, he may be committed to prison; authority hath given us the power, and the statute law hath given us authority to tender the oath to any person, and so have we tendered it you; and for your not taking of it, you are indicted by the grand jury: answer the accusation, or confute the indictment, you must do the one or the other; answer guilty, or not guilty.

J. C. Here I was interrupted, but might have said, That the people that were spectators, beholding and hearing the trials, are not to be called gazers, as the judge terms them; because it is their liberty and privilege, as they are Englishmen, and the law of England allows the same; so that they are not to be termed gazers upon this account, but are legally in that place, to hear trials, and see justice done,

and might have spoken, if occasion had been, any thing in the prisoner's defence, tending to clear up the matter in difference, and the court must have heard them or him: and this as a *stander-by*, or *amicus curiæ*; so saith Coke.

J. C. The law is built upon right reason, or right reason is the law; and whatever is contrary to right reason, is contrary to law; the reason of the law, being the law itself. I am no lawyer, and my knowledge of it is but little; yet I have had a love to it, for that reason I have found in it, and have spent some leisurable hours in the reading thereof; and the law is that which I honour, and is good in its place; many laws being just and good (not all) but, I say, a great part of it, or much of it; and that is not my intention in the least to disparage, or derogate from.

Judge. Mr. Crook, you have been told, you must plead guilty, or not guilty, or else you run yourself into a *premunire*; be not your own enemy, nor be not so obstinate.

J. C. I would not stand obstinately before you, neither am I so; if you understand it otherwise, it is a mistake indeed.

Judge. Will you speak to the indictment, and then you may plead; If you will not answer guilty, or not guilty, we will record it, and judgment shall go against you. Clerk, enter him.

Recorder. Mr. Crook, if you will answer, you may plead for yourself; or will you take the oath? The court takes no notice how you came hither: What say you? Will you answer? For a man may be brought out of Smithfield by head and shoulders, and the oath tendered to him, and may be committed, without taking notice how he came here.

J. C. That kind of proceeding is not only unjust, but unreasonable also—(here was some interruption)

ruption) and against the laws aforesaid, which say, No man shall be taken or imprisoned, but by warrant, or due process of law: so that this speech of the recorder's favours more of passion, than justice; and cruelty, than due observance of law: for every forcible restraint of a man's liberty, is an imprisonment in law. Besides, this kind of practice, to take men by force, and imprison them, and then ask them questions, the answering of which makes them guilty, is not only unrighteous in itself, but against law, and makes one evil act the ground of another; and one injury offered to one, the foundation of another; and this is my case this day.—Interruption.

Judge. Mr. Crook, you must not be your own judge, we are your judges; but for our parts we will not wrong you: will you answer guilty, or not guilty? If not, you will run yourself into a *premunire* unavoidably, and then you know what I told you would follow; for we take no notice how you came hither, but finding you here, we tender you the oath.

J. C. Then it seems you make the law a trapan to ensnare me, or as a nose-of-wax, or what you please: well! I shall leave my cause with the Lord God, who will plead for me in righteousness. But suppose I do take the oath now at this time, you may call me again to-morrow and make a new tender; or others may call me before them.

Judge. Yes, if there be new matter; or, if there fall out any emergent occasion, whereby you minister on your part new occasion: Mr. Crook, will you swear?

J. C. If I do take it to-day, it may be tendered me again to-morrow, and so next day, *ad infinitum*; whereby a great part of my time may be spent and taken up in taking the oath and swearing.

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C. Judge.

C. Judge. When you have once sworn, you may not be put upon it again, except you minister occasion on your part.

J. C. Is this the judgment of the court, that the oath once taken by me is sufficient, and ought not to be tendered a second time, without new matter ministered on my part?

Judge. Yes, you making it appear you have once taken it.

J. C. Is this the judgment of the whole court? For I would not do any thing rashly.

Judges. Yes, it is the judgment of the court; to which they all standing up, said, Yes.

J. C. Then it seems there must be some new occasion ministered by me after I have [once] taken it, or it ought not to be tendered to me the second time.

Judges. Yes.

J. C. Then by the judgment of this court, if I make it appear that I have taken the oath once and I have ministered no new matter on my part, whereby I can be justly charged with the breach of it, then it ought not to be tendered me the second time; but I am the man that have taken it once being a freeman of the city of London, when I was made free, witness the records in Guildhall, which I may produce, and no new matter appearing to you on my part, if there do, let me know it; if not, you ought not, by your own judgment, to tender me it the second time; for, *De non apparentibus, et non existantibus eadem ratio est*.—Interrupted by the shout of the court, when these last words might have been spoken.

Judge. Mr. Crook, you are mistaken, you must not think to surprize the court with criticisms, nor draw false conclusions from our judgments.

J. C. If

J. C. If this be not a natural conclusion from the judgment of the court, let right reason judge; and if you recede from your own judgments in the same breath, as it were, given even now, what justice can I expect from you? For, if you will not be just to yourselves, and your own judgments, how can I expect you should be just to me?

Judge. Mr. Crook, If you have taken it, if there be a new emergency, you are to take it again; as for instance, The king hath been out of England, and now is come in again, there be many have taken it twenty, thirty, or forty years since, yet this new emergency requires it again; and although you have taken it, yet you must not make it appear before you answer guilty, or not guilty; therefore do not wrong yourself, and prejudice yourself and family? Do you think that every fellow that comes hither shall argue as you do? We have no more to do, but to know of you, whether you will answer guilty, or not guilty, or take the oath, and then you shall be freed from the indictment; if you will not plead, clerk record it: What say you? Are you guilty, or not guilty?

J. C. Will you not stand to your own judgments? Did you not say even now, That if I had once taken the oath, it ought not to be tendered to me the second time, except I administered new matter on my part that I have not kept it, &c. but no such matter appearing, you ought not to tender it to me the second time by your own confession, much less to indict me for refusal.

Judge. If you will not plead, we will record it, and judgment shall be given against you; therefore say, guilty, or not guilty, or else we will record it. (The clerk beginning to record it.)

J. C. Before I answer, I demand a copy of my indictment; for I have heard it affirmed by counsel
sel

sel learned in the law, That if I plead before I have a copy, or have made my exceptions, my exceptions afterwards against the indictment will be made void: therefore I desire a copy of the indictment.

Judge. He that said so, deserves not the name of a counsel; for the law is, you must first answer, and then you shall have a copy. Will you plead, guilty, or not guilty?

J. C. If my pleading guilty, or not guilty, will not deprive me of the benefit of quashing the indictment for insufficiency, or other exceptions that I may make against it, I shall speak to it.

Judge. No, it will not. Will you answer, guilty, or not guilty? If you plead not, the indictment will be found against you: Will you answer? We will stay no longer.

J. C. I am upon the point; Will not my pleading deprive me of the benefit of the law? For I am tender in that respect, because it is not my own case only, but may be the case of thousands more: therefore I would do nothing that might prejudice others or myself, as a Christian, or as an Englishman.

Judge. Understand yourself, but we will not make a bargain with you, said another judge, you shall have the right done you as an Englishman, the way is to answer, guilty, or not guilty: if you plead and find the indictment not good, you may have your remedy: Answer guilty, or not guilty?

J. C. As to the indictment it is very large, and seems to be confused, and made up of some things true, and some things false; my answer therefore is, What is true in the indictment I will not deny, because I make conscience of what I say, and therefore, of what is true, I confess myself guilty, but what is false, I am not guilty of that.

Judge.

Judge. That is not sufficient; either answer guilty, or not guilty, or judgment will be given against you.

J. C. I will speak the truth as before the Lord, as all along I have endeavoured to do; I am not guilty of that which is false, contained in the indictment, which is the substance thereof.

Judge. No more ado, the form is nothing, guilty, or not?

J. C. I must not wrong my conscience, I am not guilty of what is false, as I said before what is true, I am guilty of: what is not true, I am not guilty of that; which is the substance thereof, as I said before.

Recorder. It is enough, and shall serve turn. Enter that, clerk.

The seventh day of the week, called Saturday.

Silence being made, John Crook was called to the bar. The clerk of the sessions read something concerning the jury, which was empaneled on purpose, as was said, the jury being discharged who were eye-witnesses of what passed between us and the court: and this jury, being divers of them, foldiers, some of whom did by violence and force pull and hale friends out of their meetings, and some of us out of our houses; and these were of the jury by whom we were to be tried. The clerk reading the indictment (as I remember.)

J. C. I desire to be heard a few words, which are these, That we may have liberty till the next quarter sessions to traverse the indictment, it being long, and in Latin, and like to be a precedent: and I hope I need not press it, because I understood that you promised, and especially the Recorder, who answered,

swered, when it was desired, " You shall," that we should have counsel also, the which we cannot be expected to have had the benefit of, as yet, the time being so short, and we kept prisoners, that we could not go forth to advise with counsel, neither could we tell how to get them to us; we having no copy of the indictment before this morning; and because so suddenly hurried down to the sessions, we cannot reasonably be supposed to be provided, as to matter of law, to make our defence.

Judge. We have given you time enough, and you shall have no more; for we will try you at this time, therefore swear the jury.

J. C. I desire we may have justice, and that we may not be surprized in our trial, but that we may have time till the next quarter sessions, our indictment being in Latin, and so large as it is; and this is but that which is reasonable, and is the practice of other courts: for, if it be but an action above forty shillings, it is not ordinarily ended under two or three terms. And in the quarter sessions, if one be indicted for a trespass, if it be but to the value of five shillings, he shall have liberty to enter his traverse; and, upon security given to prosecute, he shall have liberty till the next sessions, which is the ordinary practice; which liberty we desire, and we hope it is so reasonable, it will not be denied, especially upon this occasion, we being like to be made a precedent: and courts of justice have used to be especially careful in making of precedents; for we are not provided, according to law, to make our defence at this time, and therefore if we be put upon it, it will be a surprizal.

Judge. There is no great matter of law in the case, it is only matter of fact, Whether you have refused to take the oath or not, that is the point in issue; and what law can arise here?

Recorder.

Recorder. Mr. Crook, the keeper of the prison was spoken to, to tell you, that we intended to try you this day, and therefore ordered him that counsel might come to you if you would; and also that the clerk should give you a copy of the indictment: this is fair; therefore we will go on to swear the jury; for the matter is, whether you refuse the oath, or not? and that is the single point, and there needs neither law nor counsel in the case; and therefore we considered of it last night, when we sent you word, and did determine to try you, and therefore it is in vain to say any thing, for the court is resolved to try you now: therefore swear the jury, crier.

J. C. I hope you will not surprize us: then the other prisoners, who also were indicted, cried out, having spoke something before, Let us have justice, and let not the jury be sworn till we be first heard; so there was a great noise, the court being in a confusion, some crying, Take them away; others, Stay, let them alone; others saying, Go on to swear the jury; which the crier in this uproar and confusion did do something, as if he had done it: then we all cried out for justice and liberty till the next sessions; the court being in a confusion, some crying one thing, and some another, which now cannot be called to mind, by reason of the great distraction that was in the court; neither what we said to them, nor they to us, the noise was so great, and the commands of the court so various to the officers, some commanding them to take us away; others, to let us alone; others, to bring us nearer; others cried, Put them into the bail-dock; others, to put them within the farthest bar where the felons use to stand; where we were forced into accordingly: and in this hurliburly and confusion that was amongst them, some men
were

were sworn, to testify that we refused to take the oath, which we never positively did; other officers of the court, whom they would have sworn, refused to swear, though pressed to it by the chief justice, they desired to be excused. Then spake one of the prisoners again pretty much, but could hardly be understood, by reason of the noise in the court; but the people, to whom he spake with a loud voice, by way of exhortation, might hear the substance of what he said, which cannot now particularly be called to mind; but it was to express the presence and love of God to himself, and to exhort others to mind his fear, that they also might be acquainted with God, &c.

Judge. Stop his mouth, executioner; which was accordingly done.

Prisoners. Then we cried out, Will you not give us leave to speak for ourselves? We except against some of the jury, as being our enemies, and some of them who by force commanded us to be pulled out of our meetings, contrary to law, and carried us to prison without warrant, or other due process of law; and shall these be our judges? We except against them.

Judge. It is too late now, you should have done it before they had been sworn jurymen. Jury, go together, that which you have to find, is, Whether they have refused to take the oath or no, which hath been sworn before you that they did refuse: you need not go from the bar. And like words said the recorder and others, there being a confusion and noise in the court, many speaking together.

Prisoners. Then we cried for justice, and that we might be heard, to make our defence, before the jury gave their verdict; but the judge and recorder said, we should not be heard, making good by their practice, what the chief judge had said

said the day before, viz. That if we had liberty to speak, we would make ourselves famous, and then odious, crying again, Stop their mouths, executioner; which was done accordingly, with a dirty cloth, and also endeavoured to have gagged me, J. C. striving to get hold of my tongue, having a gag ready in his hand for that purpose; and so we were served several times. Then I called out with a loud voice, Will you condemn us without hearing? This is to deal worse with us, than Pilate did with Christ, who, though he condemned him without a cause, yet not without hearing him speak for himself; but you deny us both.

Judge. Let Mr. Grey come to the bar, room being made, he was conveyed to an officer in the inner bar, where he spake to the court to this purpose: I desire to know whether, according to law, and the practice of this court, myself and my fellow-prisoners may have liberty to put in bail, to prosecute our traverse at the next sessions?

Court. No, we will try you presently.

Judge. Stop their mouths, executioner: and this was the cry of many upon the bench, they being still in a continued confusion; some crying to the jury, Give in your verdict, for we will not hear them; with other words, which could not be heard for the noise, the court being in confusion.

J. C. You might as well have caused us to have been murdered before we came hither, as to bring us hither under pretence to try us, and not give us leave to make our defence; you had as good take away our lives at the bar, as to command us thus to be abused, and to have our mouths stopped: Was ever the like known? Let the righteous God judge between us. Will you hear me? You have often promised that you would.

Judge,

Judge. Hear me, and we will hear you : then he began to speak, and some others of the bench interrupted him ; sometimes they speaking two or three at a time, and a noise amongst the officers of the court : but the judge said, We may give you liberty till the next sessions, but we may choose ; and therefore will try you now.

J. C. I bade the people take notice of their promise, That I should have liberty to speak, saying, See now you be as good as your words.

Judge. The law of England is not only just, but merciful ; and therefore you shall not be surprized, but shall have what justice the law allows.

Interruption.

J. C. I remember what the judge said even now, That the law of England was a merciful law ; that the court had said before, They might, if they would, give us liberty till the next sessions, but they would not ; and the maxim of the law also is, *Summum jus, est summa injuria* ; therefore I hope your practice will make it good, that it is a merciful law ; and not to execute *summum jus*, &c. upon me, and thereby condemn yourselves out of your own mouths.

Judge. Jury, give in your verdict.

J. C. Let me have liberty first to speak, it is but few words, and I hope I shall do it with what brevity and pertinency my understanding will give me leave, and the occasion requires ; it is to the point in these two heads, viz. Matter of law, and matter of conscience : to matter of law, I have this to say, first, as to the statute itself, it was made against the papists, occasioned by the gunpowder-plot ; and is entitled, For the better discovery and suppressing of Popish recusants : but they have liberty, and we are destroyed, what in you lies.—(Interrupted by the judges, and disturbance of the court.) As to conscience, I have something to say, and

and that is, It is a tender thing, and we have known what it is to offend it; and therefore we dare not break Christ's commands, who hath said, Swear not at all; and the apostle James said, Above all things, my brethren, swear not—(interrupted) the court calling again to the executioner to stop my mouth; which he did accordingly, with his dirty cloth, as aforesaid, and his gag in his hand.

Judge. Hear the jury; who said something to him, which was supposed to give in the verdict, according to his order; for they were fit for his purpose, as it seems, they beginning to lay their heads together, before we had spoke any thing to them, only upon his words.

Judge. Crier, make silence in the court: then the recorder, taking a paper into his hand, read to this purpose, viz. The jury for the king do find, that John Crook, John Bolton, and Isaac Gray, are guilty of refusing to take the oath of allegiance; for which you do incur a *premunire*, which is the forfeiture of all your real estates during life, and personal estates for ever; and you to be out of the king's protection, and to be imprisoned during his pleasure: and this is your sentence.

J. C. But we are still under God's protection.

Recorder. Adjourn the court: which was done accordingly, and we remanded to Newgate, where we remain prisoners.

Now follows a copy of the indictment, with some notes and observations on the same; whereby it may appear, how false it is, and how easily it might have been quashed for insufficiency, had we been allowed time, which by law they ought to have granted, and been suffered to have made our own defence; but that they would not do, but stopped our mouths, as before is said, by the hands of the executioner, to prevent what otherwise, as the judge said, might have come to pass, viz. by having liberty to make our defence, by that means we should make ourselves famous, and them odious.

London ‘ **J**VR pro Dno. Rege super sacru. suu.
 Sess. ‘ presentant qd. Ad. General. Quar-
 ‘ teral. Session. Pacis Dni. Regis tent. pro Civitat.
 ‘ London apud Guihald. ejusdem Civitat. die Mer-
 ‘ curij scilt. viceffimo quinto die Junij Anno Regni
 ‘ Dni. n’ri. Caroli se’di Dei gra. Angliæ, Scot’ Franc’
 ‘ & Hiberniæ Regis Fidei defensor. &c. quarto de-
 ‘ cimo, coram Job. Frederick Milite Majore Civitat.
 ‘ London. Thoma Adams Milite & Baronet, Rico’
 ‘ Browne Milite & Baronet, & Thoma Aleyn Milite
 ‘ & Baronet, Aldr’is d’ce Civitat. ac. al. Sociis suis
 ‘ Justic. dc. d’ni Regis ad Pacem in Civitat. pred.
 ‘ conservand. Necnon ad diver’s felon transgr. &
 ‘ al. malef’ca infra eandem Civitat. perpetrat audi-
 ‘ end. & terminand. assign. Sessio. ista pacis ad-
 ‘ jornat. fuit per prefat. Justic. dc’i d’ni Regis ib’m
 ‘ usq; diem Jovis scilt. viceffim. sext. diem ejusdem
 ‘ mensis Junij anno supradicto ad horam septimam
 ‘ ante merid ejusdem diei apud Justice-hall in le
 ‘ Old Baily in Paroch. sci. Sepulchri in Warda de
 ‘ Farringdon extra London pred. tenend. coram pre-
 ‘ fat. Justic. & al. Sociis suis ad faciend. ulterius
 ‘ prout Cur. Con. &c. Ac ad eundem diem Jovis
 viceffimum

viceffimum sextum diem Junii Anno quarto de-
 cimo fupradicto General Quarterial. Seflio ifta
 pacis tent. fuit pro Civitat. *London* pred. per ad-
 jornament pred. apud Justicehall pred. in Paroch.
 & Ward. pred. coram præfat *Jobe. Frederick* Milite
 Majore Civitat, *London, Thoma Adams* Milite &
 Baronet, *Ricardo Browne* Milite & Baronet, &
 Thoma Aleyn Milite & Baronet, Aldr'is d'ce Ci-
 vitat. ac *Willo Wilde* Milite & Baronet, uno Scri-
 vien dc'i din Regis ad Legem ac Recordatur. Ci-
 vitat. pred. Ac al. Sociis fuis Justic. d'ci D'ni
 Regis ad pacem in Civitat. pred. confervand.
 Necnon ad divers. felon. transgr. & al. malefa. in-
 fra eandem Civitat. perpetrat. audiend. & ter-
 minand assign. Ac adtunc & ibm. præd. Gene-
 ral. Quarterial. Seflio Pacis pred. ulterius adjornat.
 fuit per præfat. Justic. ufque diem Veneris fcilt.
 viceffim. feptim. diem dci. mēfis Junii Anno
 quarto decimo fupradicto, ad horam feptimam
 ante merid. ejufdem diei apud Justicehall pred. in
 parochia & Warda præd. tenend. coram præfat.
 Justic. & al. Sociis fuis ad faciend. ulterius prout
 Cur. Con. Ac fuperiende ad iftam eandem Gene-
 ral. Quarterial. Seflion. Pacis tent. pro Civitat.
London. per Adjornament præd. apud Justicehall
 præd. in Paroch. & Warda præd. dco die Veneris
 viceffimo feptimo die Junii Anno quarto decimo
 fupradicto, coram præfat. *Jobe. Frederick* Milite
 Majore Civitat. *London Thoma Adams* Milite &
 Baronet, *Rico. Brown* Milite & Baronet, * *Rico.*
Chiverton Armigero, & *Thoma Aleyn* Milite & Ba-
 ronet, Aldr'is d'ce Civitat. Ac *Willo Wilde* Milite
 & Baronet. uno Servien. dci. D'ni Regis ad Le-
 gem ac Recordatur. ejufdem Civitat. ac al Sociis
 fuis Justic. d'ci D'ni Regis ad Pacem in Civitat.

* This is error, for R. C. Arm. was not before named.

' præd. conservand. Necnon ad divers felon. transgr.
 ' & al. malef'ca infra eand. Civitat. perpetrat. au-
 ' diend. & terminand. assign. in aperta General.
 ' Quarterial. Session. præd. præfat Justiciar. Pacis,
 ' ult noiat. existentes major pars Justic. Pacis ipsius
 ' D'ni Regis infra d'cam Civitat. *London* ad tunc
 ' scilt. dco. viceffimo septimo die *Junii*. Anno quar-
 ' to decimo supradco apud dcam Paroch. Sc. *Se-*
 ' *pulchri* in Warda de *Farringdon* extra *London*.
 ' præd. presen. existend. obtuler. Anglie die tender
 ' *Jobi Crooke* nuper de *London* Generoso, *Jobi Bolton*
 ' nuper die *London* Aurifabro, & *Isaac Gray* nuper
 ' de *London*. Generoso & eor. cuilibt seperatim per
 ' se (ad tunc existen. & cuilibt. eor. existen. ultra
 ' etat. octodecim-Annor.*) Jurament. content. in
 ' quadam actu in Parliament. Dni. *Jacobi* nuper
 ' Regis *Angliæ* tent. per Prorogationem † apud
 ' *Westm.* in Com. *Middlef.* quinto die *Novembris*
 ' Anno Regni sui *Angliæ Franc.* & *Hiberniæ* tertio,
 ' & *Scotiæ* tricesimo nono nuper edit, & pro vis in
 ' hijs Anglicanis verbis sequen. viz. I ‡ do truly
 ' and sincerely acknowledge, profess, testify, and
 ' declare in my conscience, before God and the
 ' world, That our Sovereign Lord King CHARLES
 ' the Second || is lawful and rightful King of this
 ' realm, and of all others his Majesty's dominions
 ' and countries: and that the Pope, neither of him-
 ' self, nor by any authority of the church or see of
 ' Rome, or by any other means with any other,
 ' hath any power or authority to depose the King,

* This is error, because it is not said, ' Et subditi d'ni Regis.'

† This should be ' Prorogationes,' for there was a double prorogation.

‡ This is error, because it wants A. B.

|| It ought to be with some expression of ' mutatis mutandis,' of the name of King Charles the second, instead of King James, who is only named in this act. This is error, it is not agreeable to the statute; for that saith only King James: and certainly the statute intended no otherwise; for it is said, For the trial of his Majesty's subjects, how they stand affected, &c. and not the subjects of his Majesty's heirs and successors.

' or to dispose of any of his Majesty's kingdoms
 ' or dominions, or to authorize any foreign prince
 ' to invade or annoy him or his countries, or to
 ' discharge any of his subjects of their allegiance
 ' and obedience to his Majesty, or to give licence
 ' or leave to any of them to bear arms, raise tu-
 ' mults, or to offer any violence or hurt to his
 ' Majesty's royal person, state, or government, or to
 ' any of his Majesty's subjects, within his Majesty's
 ' dominions. Also, I do swear from my heart,
 ' that notwithstanding any declaration, or sentence
 ' of excommunication, or deprivation, made or
 ' granted, or to be made or granted by the Pope,
 ' or his successors, or by any authority derived, or
 ' pretended to be derived from him or his see,
 ' against the said King, his heirs, or successors, or
 ' any absolution of the said subjects from their obe-
 ' dience; I will bear faith and true allegiance to
 ' his Majesty, his heirs, and successors, and him and
 ' them will defend to the uttermost of my power,
 ' against all conspiracies and attempts whatsoever,
 ' which shall be made against his or their persons,
 ' their crown and dignity, by reason or colour of
 ' any such sentence or declaration, or otherwise;
 ' and will do my best endeavour to disclose and
 ' make known unto his Majesty, his heirs, and suc-
 ' cessors, all treasons and traiterous conspiracies,
 ' which I shall know, or hear of, to be against him,
 ' or any of them. And I do farther swear, That I do
 ' from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as im-
 ' pious and heretical, this damnable doctrine and
 ' position, That princes which be excommunicated
 ' or deprived by the Pope, may be deposed or mur-
 ' dered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever.
 ' And I do believe, and in * my conscience am re-

* [My] not in the statute,

' solved, that neither the Pope, nor any person
 ' whatsoever, hath power to absolve me of this
 ' oath, or any part thereof, which I acknowledge
 ' by good and full authority to be lawfully mini-
 ' stered unto me, and do renounce all pardons and
 ' dispensations to the contrary. And all these
 ' things I do plainly and sincerely acknowledge and
 ' swear, according to these expresse words by me
 ' spoken, and according to the plain and common
 ' sense and understanding of the same words, with-
 ' out any equivocation, or mental evasion, or secret
 ' reservation whatsoever. And I do make this re-
 ' cognition and acknowledgment heartily, willingly
 ' and truly, upon the true faith of a Christian. So
 ' help me God.—Ac qd. prefat. Justic. pacis ult.
 ' no'iat * ad tunc † scilt. dco. viceffimo septimo die
 ' Junii Anno quarto decimo supradicto apud Paroch.
 ' & Ward. præd. in dca. ‡ Quarterial. Session. pacis
 ' præd. eosdem *Job'em Crooke, Job'em Bolton, & Isaacum*
 ' *Gray*, & eor. quemlibt. seperatim per se requisiver.
 ' ad Jurament. illud super sacrosca. Dei Evangel.
 ' capiend. Quodq; iidem *Jobes Crooke, Jobes Bolton,*
 ' & *Isaacus Gray*, Jurament. præd. sic per pr. nōi'
 ' at. Justic. paces ejusdem *Jobi Crook, Jobi Bolton,*
 ' & *Isaaco Gray*, ut præfectur oblat. & requisit. ad-
 ' tunc & ibm. obstinate & pertinaciter cape recusa-
 ' ver. & quilibt. eor. Recusavit ||. In malum ex-
 ' emplum omniu. alior. dci. Dni. Regis nunc fidel.
 ' subdit. Et in contempt. dci. Dni. Regis nunc
 ' legumq; suar contraformam Statut. præd. Ac con-
 ' trapacem dci. Dni Regis nunc Coron. & Digni-
 ' tat. suos, &c.

W I L D.

* Ad pacem conservand. nes non, &c. left out

† Et ibidem, is left out.

‡ Generalis, left out.

|| Contra debitam quoadlibet eor. Legeanciam, ought here to be inserted;
 for if he be not a natural subject, the oath is not to be tendered to him.

Immediately after the tender to J. C. J. B. and I. G. though they be
 termed ' subditos dci. end. Re.'

Memorand.

Memorand. That in the writ of oyer and terminer, Pasche 9. Hen. 8. upon the insurrection in London, it was resolved clearly by all the justices of England, That the justices of oyer and terminer cannot inquire one day, and the same day determine; no more can the justices of the peace, &c. but the justices of gaol-delivery, and justices in eyre, may well do it; El. 8. Keyleway's Rep. f. 159. b. pl. 2. But they do not call themselves so in the indictment.

If one in his absence be found guilty of an offence, whereby he incurs a *premunire*, he hath two months time allowed him, after he is outlawed, to be heard, 27 Edw. 3. 1 cap. Coke upon Littl. sect. 201. f. 134, b. saith, That the ancient law was, upon trials for felony, &c. the defendant had fifteen days time, or more, if he prayed it, to consider of his answer.

With this agrees Britton, fo. 10. b.

Fortescue in libro de laudib. Legum Angliæ.

Mirror of Justice, cap. 4. sect. 7.

The statute of 28 Edw. 1. 9. provides, That inquests shall be of the next neighbours, most sufficient, and least suspicious, upon penalty of double damages.

25 Edw. 3. cap. 3. No indictor be upon the inquests for felony nor trespass, if challenged.

34 Edw. 3. 4. Juries to be of the next people, not to be suspected or procured. With this agrees Regist. fo. 178.

11 Hen. 4. 9. That if any indictment be made but by inquest returned by the sheriff, without denomination to him of their names, by any but his sworn officer, it shall be void.

Reader, these notes and observations are here set down, that thou mayest both know thy privilege by the law, which is good, being used lawfully, and also what usage we have met withal from those who should know the law, and are sworn truly to minister the same without respect of persons: but for such judges to punish so severely for refusing to swear, and themselves to be so regardless of keeping an oath when they have sworn, surely is one argument, and that a good one too, to convince me and others of the lawfulness of not swearing at all, would be the heedfulness, and careful observance, of them that have already sworn, to keep their oaths; at least, until this be done, to forbear punishing those that fear an oath; otherwise, it may be said to them, as was said in the like case, Thou that sayest a man ought to swear, through breaking thine oath dishonourest thou God? Surely these things ought not so to be: what a judge doth, is looked upon as a thing that ought to be done, and therefore his miscarriage hurts the more. Besides, the judges judgments become as precedents and records; and what robbery is like to that, when the law itself shall be made use of, by unrighteous judges, to rob and despoil us of our estates and liberties? Judges should suppose all men to be good, till they be proved to be evil: and the rule of law is, *Quod in criminalibus probationes debent esse luce clariores*; (Englished) in criminal cases proofs ought to be as clear as the light, that they may rather condemn, than the judge. But I shall end this particular with this maxim, as my judgment, *Melius est omnia mala pati, quam uno malo consentire*; (Englished) It is better to suffer all evil, than to consent to one evil.

Now followeth those two points of law and conscience, which J. C. desired of the court; that he might be heard to speak to them, as God should give him utterance at that time, expecting they would have given him liberty until the next sessions, and therefore had no thoughts of speaking to these things when he was called to the bar; but the court denied him liberty, yet he began to speak as followeth, but was interrupted.

AS to law in this case, for which I am called to your bar, many things might be said; as first, to the statutes themselves that require the oath.

For the 3d Jac. 4. the ground or cause of the making that law, was the gunpowder-plot, as is manifest in the preamble of the said act, in which the Papists only were the persons concerned, and therefore the title of the act is called, An Act for the Discovering and Repressing of Popish Recusants: observe, not Popish recusants and others, but only Popish recusants; the Parliament intending them and no others when that law was made; as appears farther by these words in the preamble of the 7th Jacobi, viz. 'Beseeching your Majesty, that the same oath may be administered to all your subjects.' (Mark) By these words, 'to all your subjects,' implied, that the 3d Jacobi was to be restrained only to the Popish recusants, otherwise these words, 'to all,' &c. need not have been here inserted; and this may be farther manifest unto him that will take the pains to read the preamble to the act, and also the oath itself: the preamble saith, 'Forasmuch as it is found by daily experience, that many of his Majesty's subjects, that adhere in their hearts to the Popish religion, by the infection drawn from thence, and by the wicked and devilish counsels of Jesuits, seminaries,

naries, and other like persons, dangerous to the church and state, are so far perverted in the point of their loyalty and due allegiance unto the king's Majesty and crown of England, as they are ready to entertain and execute any treasonable conspiracies and practices, as evidently appears by that more than barbarous and horrible attempt, to have blown up with gunpowder, the king, queen, and prince, and lords and commons, in the house of parliament assembled, tending to the utter subversion of the whole state; lately undertaken by the instigation of Jesuits and seminaries, and in advancement of their religion, by their scholars, taught and instructed by them to that purpose,' &c. These be the words of the preamble, by which may be seen, for whom this law was made; and the oath itself manifests no less, as may be seen in the recital of it in the indictment aforesaid; for the substance of it, is, To renounce the Pope and Papacy, and was made on purpose to find out those that were that way affected, and for no other end.

And whereas it is said, the words are general towards the end of the act, viz. 'And if the said person or persons, or any other person whatsoever,' &c. Observe, that these general words ought to be restrained to the persons intended in the act, and signified both by the title, and in the preamble thereof, as aforesaid. The title saith, 'For the Discovering and repressing of Popish Recusants;' that general words may be so restrained in a statute, hath been adjudged, as may be seen in the fourth book of Coke's Institutes, in his treatise upon the high commission, the question stated by him, is, Whether general words in an act of parliament do include all particulars, and so exclude all interpretations? His answer is, That divers acts of parliament, which are general in words, have, upon consideration,

sideration, &c. received a particular interpretation, as appears, 1 Hen. fol. 12, 13. by authority of parliament, all pre-eminences, prerogatives, franchises, and liberties, were given by H. 7. intailed generally without limitation or saving; and the question was, Whether the franchises and liberties of Lords and other inferior subjects were given? And it was resolved by all the judges, That they were not, notwithstanding the general words, for the reasons expressed in the said book. So that there is one case wherein words generally mentioned in an act of parliament, have been particularly understood, and restrained to the persons intended in the said act.

Again, Coke saith, that preambles are the keys to open the meaning of the makers of the act, and mischiefs which they intended to remedy; and the judges of the law have ever expounded acts generally, in words to be particular, where the intent hath been particular, which are the words of the book. And therefore upon that rule it is they are adjudged, that where the statute of the 7th Edw. 6. 1. is general, viz. 'That if any treasurer, receiver, or minister, accomptant,' &c. it was adjudged, notwithstanding the generality of the words, that this doth not extend to the receiver of common persons; for the reasons given in the said book, the judges restrained the generality to a particular, viz. the king's receiver only; because the intent of the makers of the act, was to punish only the ministers, or receivers of the king, and that because of the stile or title to the said act; all which may be much more urged in the case in hand, because the title is so plain, viz. 'For the discovering and suppressing of Popish recusants,' &c. and the preamble also shewing it to be made upon the occasion of the gunpowder plot, &c. And therefore for these, with divers other reasons that might be mentioned,
those

those general words before mentioned, by which we were judged to incur a *premunire*, ought to be restrained to Popish recusants, and particularly interpreted concerning them; and not to make the law a snare to those who do from their hearts, and with their tongues also, deny the Pope, with all alliances to, and dependencies upon him, and that both as to his principles and practices: now to make these persons offenders, only because of those general words, they refusing to swear, because they fear an oath, but readily and willingly afford and yield all due and just obedience, and abhor from their souls whatever is contrary either in principle or practice: these persons, without doubt, were never intended by the parliament to be forced to take that oath, they refusing in conscience to take an oath, and not because due subjection is required: therefore those that punish them for such their refusal, have the greater sin, for which the righteous God will call them to account. I shall conclude this with a general rule allowed by all, in construction of statutes, *Quamvis lex generaliter loquitur restringenda tamen est, ut cessante ratione et ipse cesset, cum enim ratio sit anima vigorque ipsius legis; non videtur legislator id sensisse quod ratione careat, etiamsi verborum generalitas prima facie aliter suadeat.* In English thus, Though the law may speak generally, yet it is to be restrained; because reason ceasing, the law itself ceaseth; for reason is the strength and soul of the law itself; and therefore it may not be thought, that the law makers had any such intention, when the reason is wanting, though the general words, at their first view, may seem otherwise; for the maxim is, That the reason of the law, is the law itself.

Now

Now followeth some exceptions against the statute made in 7 Jacobi 6. which requires the taking of the said oath, &c.

First, The title is to be considered, which is, Who shall take the oath of obedience, and by whom it shall be ministered, and within what time. Note, That it is not said, to the king and his successors, but only to the king. And it appears by the preamble also, that this act was made to enlarge the persons that were to take the oath, being all the subjects, of what estates, dignity, pre-eminence, sex, quality, or degree soever, he, she, or they be, or shall be, above the age of eighteen years, &c. the former act of the 3d Jacobi appertaining only to Popish recusants, as before is said. Again, note, that in the title aforesaid it is said, And within what time it shall be taken, which time it seems to be particularly set down, within which all sorts of persons were to take it; as appears in these words towards the end of the said act, And to the intent, that due execution may be had of the premises without delay, it is further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all the persons before named, who have any certain time limited or expressed when to take the aforesaid oath, shall at the time therein prescribed take the same; and the rest, within six months next after the end of this present session of parliament. Note, here is a prefixed time for the several sorts of persons to take the said oath, And the rest (mark that) implying all others whatsoever, to take it within six months next after the end of this present session of parliament; but no provision is made in the said act, either to minister it afterwards, or to swear to any other besides King James, as it seems, and as by the oath itself also appears; for it is said, The oath was to be administered for the trial of his Majesty's subjects how they stand affected,

affected, &c. and not to the subjects of his Majesty, his heirs, and successors; because it may be supposed, the law makers intended this oath to be only sworn to King James; for it is no where said in the statute, that those who have power to tender the oath, should swear all persons, that were to take it, to King James, and afterwards to his heirs and successors; for though heirs and successors are named in the oath, yet it is no where said, that this oath shall be enforced upon the subjects, to swear to any other king after his decease. By all which it may be thought, that King James only was to be sworn to, by virtue of these laws; for although he that took the oath, was thereby obliged to perform it both to the king, his heirs, and successors; yet it is no where expressed in either of the acts, that the persons then appointed to take the oath, or others afterwards, should take the same to every of the king's heirs and successors, as they should come to the crown. But notwithstanding all that hath been said, if it should yet be admitted, that it might be tendered on the behalf of his successors after his decease; yet these words are carefully to be observed by all who tender the said oath, viz. Being duly tendered, according to the true intent and meaning of the statutes; and the rather, the ministers of the oath ought to be careful in observing all due circumstances, as in the causing it to be read at the times of the respective tenders, according to the directions of the statutes, which was not done to us upon our trial, some of us not having it read to us at all, and others but part of it, and that but once neither; and the more strictly, because the penalty for refusing is so great as *premunire*; and those other words also are truly to be considered, viz. According to the true intent and meaning hereof, which cannot be supposed to be observed, when it

it is tendered unto those who do yield all due obedience unto the king, and also do deny the Pope, his principles and practices, as aforesaid, and refuse it in conscience to an oath; these answering the substance of the law, which requires obedience to the king, but cannot observe the ceremony or imposed formality thereof, for conscience sake; and in this case this distinction is to be kept unto in this law as well as others, viz. *Forma verbalis et forma legalis*, which is *essentialis*, or the substance of the law, or thing to be performed; for, *Lex non est in sermonam foliis, sed in radice rationis posita est.* (Enlified) The law is not in the leaves of words, but is placed in the root of reason; and if the distinction aforesaid had been observed, the oath could not in justice have been tendered to us, when the substance of the law is answered, though the particular words or formalities be not kept to, yet it hath been adjudged a good observance, as in Buge's case, in the tenth book of Coke's Reports upon the stat. of Hen. 6. 23. giving power to the sheriffs to take bail, &c. these three things were alleged against the sheriff. 1. In the obligation, the law saith, reasonable sureties, and the sheriff took but one surety. 2. In the condition, the sheriff put in, that the prisoner should appear in 'person,' and the statute saith, 'only appear' generally, without the word person. 3. *Ad respondendum*, when the statute saith only the day, not naming to answer. Yet for all this, the obligation was judged good, for the reasons mentioned in the book. And surely, if these omissions and additions, contrary to the express words of the statute, could be justly dispensed withal, much more than in our case, might our refusal of a ceremony, or imposed formality, be borne withal, the substance being observed, especially considering the disproportion of the penalties;

the

the former the loss of a small sum only, but ours the loss of all our outward estates and liberties also, besides being put out of the king's protection, as our sentence was: but we leave this matter to be judged by Him that judgeth righteously.

More precedents might be urged in this case, to manifest the hard measure we have met withal, but I shall conclude with these few instances following, *vide* Sir Robert Cotton's Collections, Records in the Tower, 39 Hen. 6. 1. That an oath being the law of man, ought not to be performed when the same tendeth to the suppression of truth and right, which is against the law of God. And the statute of 28 Hen. 8. 7. saith, That no man, of what estate, degree, or condition soever he be, hath power to dispense with God's laws, as all the clergy of this realm, and the most part of the universities of Christendom, and we also do affirm and think. And the common law of England also saith no less, Doct. and Stud. cap. 3. p. 6. Man may only make laws of such things as he may judge upon, and the judgment may not be of inward things, but only of outward things. And the same book also saith, p. 8. The laws of princes, the comments of prelates, the statutes of commonalties, nor yet the ordinances of the church, are not righteous nor obligatory, except they be consonant to the law of God. And cap. 2. p. 4. speaking of the law written in the heart, he saith, Against the law, prescription, statute, custom may not avail; and if any be brought in against it, they be void, and against justice. These things considered, it is manifest to every unprejudiced mind, that whatever can be said concerning the statutes aforesaid, being but the laws of men, they are void and null, because contrary to the law of Christ, who saith, Swear not at all. And if banishing, fining, and imprisoning men
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for conscience, &c. were the flagellent methods of the late most tyrannous times, who had neither law nor reason to support them, as the bishop of Exon faith in his late book against the Quakers; then what are these dealings and prosecutions, and sentences against us and others, only for conscience sake, because we fear an oath, in obedience to our Lord, who faith, Swear not at all? And what these are to be accounted, and what law or reason they have to support them, I leave the wise in heart to judge.

Now followeth the Point of Conscience, that I desired to be heard to speak to.

CONSCIENCE hath a voice, and is worthy to be heard, because, according to its evidence for or against, shall every man receive his sentence. That which it speaks, concerning swearing in my heart, is according to Christ's command, Matt. v. 34. who faith, Swear not at all; and the example of the apostle James v. 12. who continued in the doctrine of Christ, and faith, "Above all things, my brethren, swear not; neither by heaven, nor earth, nor any other oath; lest ye fall into condemnation:" he knew Christ's mind, and therefore leaves out the word communication, implying that no kind of oath, upon any occasion, is to be used among the brethren and disciples of Christ. And the apostle Paul, Rom. xiv. 11. and Phil. ii. 11. referring to the prophet's words, Isaiah xlv. 23. where it is said, "Unto me every tongue shall swear," &c. but the apostle leaveth out the word swear, as unsuitable to gospel times, and inserts in-

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stead thereof the word confess, saying, "Every tongue shall confess to God;" as if that which might be sworn to in the time of the law, is now only to be confirmed by bare confession or negation; and the reason is, because gospel days are supposed to be attended with clearer light, and greater power, that our yea might be yea, and our nay nay, in all things; for now whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil, and savoureth of fleshly distrust, as the apostle phraseth it elsewhere, 2 Cor. i. 17, 18, &c. And though the law made nothing perfect, yet the bringing in of a better hope doth; and unto this perfection Christ Jesus is pressing his disciples, as may be seen, Matt. v. last verse, where he concludes with these words, after he had pressed them to many things, and not to swear at all; "be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect:" for the requiring of an oath supposeth unbelief in the one party, which is no more to be pleaded for, than it is to be practised in a true Christian; for they that are truly Christians, are sons of God; and as many as are so, are led by the Spirit of God, Rom. viii. 14. which is Truth, and leadeth them into all truth. Much might be said on this behalf, but it being so fully asserted by divers witnesses, whose testimonies are published concerning this subject, for the good of all that desire to know the truth, I shall conclude with few words, viz. That there being both so full and plain texts of Scripture to ground such a belief upon, as ours is in this point, and such demonstration of right reason also, it may very well be spoke to, as a case of conscience, and ought to have audience at your bar, and the opposers of it, and the imposers of an oath, will be the more inexcusable before God, in the day when he shall sit to judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ according to that gospel which saith, Swear not

not at all. Where then will those appear, that inflict so great punishments upon the innocent, that make conscience both of what they say and do? And if this maxim be true, that *conscientia errans obligat*, as the bishop of Exon confesseth, how then shall the punishers of such men, for practising according to their consciences, truly enlightened, escape the righteous judgments of God? For if conscience be that, for the sake of which, and not for wrath only, obedience is to be yielded to magistrates; then, in true equity and right reason, it followeth, the magistrates ought not to punish for such obedience as is according to conscience.

Some animadversions upon the whole matter, shewing the severity and unmercifulness, if not cruel injustice, of the late proceedings against us: Leaving it to be judged by God's witness in every conscience.

Considering our first taking without warrant by force of arms, and our commitment thereupon, with the proceedings upon that commitment at Hicks's Hall, Middlesex, by indictment against J.C. upon the late act of parliament against Quakers, &c. and his pleading not guilty thereunto, with the court's committing him again to prison, where he remained until the sessions in the Old Bailey, as aforesaid; the court's often refusal to take any notice of former proceedings, or any injury or wrong that he had sustained, either in apprehension or proceedings, or so much as the cause itself, for which he was imprisoned.

The court's putting him upon interrogatories, no accuser appearing, to accuse himself, in tendering him the oath of allegiance, as a snare, that so his refusal might become a crime for them to punish

him for ; carrying themselves rather as parties, than as equal judges between two.

Because we were surprized in our trial, expecting that, according to our *mittimus*, and former proceedings, we should have been tried upon the late act of parliament, made on purpose against Quakers, &c. Not in the least expecting any such proceedings as we met withal ; and therefore could not be provided to make our defence according to law ; seeing we were committed upon pretence of one law, and prosecuted under colour of another ; which could not, without force, cast any face upon us, as persons concerned to be tried by it, viz. 3 Jacob. 4. entitled, An Act for discovering and repressing of Popish Recusants.

It further appears, in that our judges declined the late act, which was made on purpose, after the imprisoning so many thousand Quakers, only for refusing to take the same oath of allegiance ; which imprisonment begat so many debates in both the houses of parliament, that it may be supposed they concluded the penalty of *premunire*, according to the former laws, was either too great and severe, or that the Quakers, so called, were not at all within the intent of those laws ; and therefore they enacted, That for the first refusal to swear, they might be fined, not exceeding five pounds ; for the second refusal, not exceeding ten pounds ; and the third refusal, it might be lawful for the king to cause them to be transported, &c. But these judges, not liking the parliament's act, nor their judgments expressed in the same, concerning punishing the Quakers, have found out a way to make them feel their little finger to be heavier than the parliament's loins ; as is manifest by the sentence of *premunire* lately passed, only for refusing to swear ; whereby they also slight the king's declarations, which say, That
no

no man should be molested, or called in question, for his conscience, &c. as they did his late proclamation, when it was given them in court to be read, which saith, That no man shall have his house searched, or be taken, or imprisoned, under any pretence whatsoever, except by a warrant first had and obtained from some of the privy council, or some justice of the peace, &c. But of these the court would take no notice, when they were urged to them.

Because, when time until the next sessions was desired, for these reasons: 1. Because the indictment was in Latin, and so large. 2. There was need of counsel in the case. 3. It was to be a precedent; and therefore, for themselves, as well as us, there was need of time: judges heretofore being careful in making precedents. Unto all which we had this answer returned, Stop their mouths, executioner; and, Take them away: and all this when it was the proper time for us to make our defence.

Because the moderate jury, that had served upon several trials at the same sessions, were dismissed, and a new jury impanelled only for us, consisting of several persons who had a hand in our illegal apprehensions and commitments.

Their unrighteousness is farther manifest from the recorder's answer to us, when we pressed for time, who said, They could not grant it, because they must deliver the gaol; and yet several persons, that were taken and imprisoned upon the same account with some of us, are continued still in prison, there being nothing done unto them in order to any trial: but as liars have need of good memories, so have such judges of careless auditors and spectators, that their words and actions may not be taken notice of. Besides, at the same sessions,

the oath was tendered to some persons, and although they refused, yet was liberty granted them till the next sessions; which renders such judges guilty either of impartiality, or injustice, or both; and thus they condemn themselves by their own sayings.

Lastly, That which aggravates their severity and cruelty to us, is farther manifest by these things following. 1. That none of the kings of Israel that we read of, ever required such an oath of the people. 2. Inasmuch as the refusal of the oath, simply considered, doth the king no harm, nor the taking of it any good. 3. If it were an offence to refuse to take it, yet the punishment is not proportionable to the offence, which by the just law it ought to be. 4. To conclude, the oath was not duly tendered, according to their own law, inasmuch as it was not read at all to some of us, only we were asked, if we would take it; and to others but once, and not quite through neither, to our hearing and understanding; and none of us in words denied then to take it. He that deserves punishment, is supposed to have done or said some evil; Now the law saith, *Malum non habet efficiendam, sed deficiendam causam*; in English thus, Evil hath not an efficient, but a deficient cause, saith Coke, because some virtue is wanting. Now what virtue is wanting in him that doth speak the truth, without dissimulation, but dare not swear at all?

These things truly considered, and duly weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, it will soon appear which scale goeth down, and over whom this motto deserves to be written, MENE TEKEL, &c. Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting: for this is the day for discovering of false weights and measures, and of the measuring of the temple,

temple, and the worshippers therein, according to John's prophecy, in Rev. xi. And hearken also what the prophet saith, Amos v. 7 and 10. "Ye who turn judgment into wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth; and hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and abhor him that speaketh uprightly:" and at verse 27, it is said, "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity," &c. saith the Lord, "whose name is the God of Hosts.

J. CROOK.

POSTSCRIPT.

READER,

MARVEL not, that in this discourse thou findest the author out of his wonted method, in so often using the laws of men: it is not his soul's delight to be wading in such muddy waters; neither doth he now use the same to upbraid the professors thereof: for surely he drinks of clearer streams than any flow from such fountains; yet he hath learned to set things in their proper places, and to give them their proper due. For even from the good old laws of England, as well as other things, there hath been an apostacy, and is a declension from what once they were; and their books shew no less, Doct. & Stud. chap. 2. p. 4. 'There is a law written in the heart of man, which is man created in that image of God; and this law is always good and righteous, stirring up a man to do good, and abhor the evil: and therefore against this law, prescription, statute, custom, may not prevail; and if any be brought in against it, they be void, and against justice.' These be the words of the book, with many such like that might be mentioned, sufficient to condemn all those that act contrary; but this is enough at present for this end,

that, if it be possible, some of them, who have been so long conversing with the laws of men without, that they have forgotten to mind the law of God within; upon which all the laws of men should be built, as themselves confess. And therefore, those who will not receive truth, because this author speaks it, may receive it from their own poets, as the apostle saith in another case: and if this be true, which learned Coke sets down, that

*Verba ligunt homines, taurorum cornua boves :
Cornu bos capitur, voce ligatur homo.*

If this be true, then for shame, swear men no more :
If words be sufficient to bind, what need oaths ?

J. CROOK,

Nov

Now followeth some Collections, that passed at the same Court of Sessions, by Isaac Grey, called Doctor in Physick, at the Old Bailey, receiving the same Sentence of premunire with the other two.

ISAAC GREY being called to the bar :

Judge. Will you take the oath of allegiance?

Grey. I have been near five weeks in prison, I desire to know for what.

Judge. We take no notice of your imprisonment, nor how you came here: Will you take the oath?

Grey. I desire to know for what I am imprisoned, and then I am ready to answer: for no man, in this particular, hath received so much wrong as myself, having received a wound, whereby I was in jeopardy of my life.

Judge. If any have wronged you, take your course in law: Will you swear?

Grey. I am a man of a tender conscience, and do desire time to consider.

Judge. Take him away: which was accordingly done.

The next day Isaac Grey was called to the bar, and asked by the judge, if he would yet take the oath? Recorder speaking unto him on this wise: Mr. Grey, you are a wise understanding man, and a scholar; be advised what you do, and do not ruin yourself, but take the oath.

Grey. I desire time to consider, and to do nothing rashly.

Then in the afternoon were all three again called to the bar, and the indictment read.

Judge. Mr. Grey, will you take the oath? Crier, hold him the book.

Grey. I desire to know the cause of my first imprisonment, and to discharge me of the same, before

fore I give my answer to the oath; for I do not know myself guilty of any crime.

Judge. The law supposeth you to be dis-affect-ed to the present government, and therefore the oath is tendered you.

Grey. I understand that the fundamental law of England alloweth no man to be accused or condemned upon supposition: I do farther affirm, and that in the light of God, That I am not an enemy to the king, nor to any man living upon the face of the earth.

Judge. Will you answer guilty, or not guilty?

Grey. I desire time to consider of the truth of this matter; the indictment being large, and having much contained in it, which indeed I do not well understand.

Judge. Will you yet swear, or plead to the indictment?

Grey. I have told you, and that for conscience sake, I dare do nothing rashly.

Judge. What do you talk to us of conscience? Every fellow may plead conscience?

Grey. Do you use to swear such as make no conscience?

Judge. Guilty, or not guilty? When you have answered to this, you may plead what you can in your own defence; but first answer guilty, or not guilty: the rule of the law is, you must first answer.

Grey. Would you have men swear, whether they will or nay, especially when against their conscience?

Judge. We have consciences as well as you: if there be any thing, as to matter of conscience, it is nothing; you must plead guilty, or not guilty, that we may not spend time any longer,

Grey,

Grey. Truly, I desire not that the time should be taken up in any thing that may not advantage the good of the people: therefore before I plead, give me a copy of the indictment, and then I shall plead.

Judge. Sirrah, guilty, or not guilty?

Grey. I desire first to be heard as a Christian, and then as an Englishman.

Judge. Do not I tell you, sirrah, if you will plead not guilty, you shall be heard; but if you will not, you will run yourself into a *premunire*?

Grey. I appeal then to God Almighty, for I shall not wrong my conscience.

Judge. It is no matter of conscience; guilty or not guilty?

Grey. Not guilty.

The last day of trial all the three persons afore-said being called to the bar, after some discourse between my fellow-prisoners and the court, myself was forced from thence before I was heard, my fellow-prisoners being violently thrust within the felons bar, but myself, by command from the bench, was not thrust there; but I desired to be with my fellow-prisoners, and to fare as they fared, and so was put in with them; but after some time, the court being in a confusion, and their officers abusing my fellow-prisoners, by stopping their mouths and the common hangman endeavoured to gag one of them, that they might not speak in their own defence. Then I desired I might be heard; upon which the court called me nearer to them: then I approached to their bar, and spake on this wise, I desire to know whether, according to the law of England, and the proceedings of this court, we may not be allowed to put in bail to prosecute our traverse at the next sessions?

To

To which they answered, We might not.

Then I desired them to do me and my fellow-prisoners justice: for you are to know, that as we stand arraigned at this bar, so shall you appear before the great tribunal of God's justice, to give an account of this day's work, as also of all the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil; and what measure you mete to us, shall be measured to you again.

Judge. We know that as well as you; and then called to swear the jury, the court being in a confusion, and the officers and hangman abusing my fellow prisoners, as aforesaid; then I went my way, the chief justice, so called, being in a rage, called to me in an abrupt manner, saying, You shall be tried according to the laws.

Grey. I do desire to be tried by the laws, and not by passion. Then they went on, being all in a confusion and disorder, unto sentence, which was on this wise, You shall forfeit all your real estate for life, and your personal estate for ever; and be put out of the king's protection, and imprisoned during the king's pleasure, according to the statute of *premunire*. Which sentence also passed upon my two fellow-prisoners aforesaid.

These things are part of what passed between the court and myself, many things being omitted by reason of the often interruptions, and are written to prevent mistakes, and to inform all moderate inquirers concerning the severity and injustice that we met withal, not only to the loss of all my estate and liberty, but of my practice also, to the damage and detriment of many of my patients, who, through necessity, are compelled to come to prison to me, but have been sometimes hindered from coming to speak to me.

But

But our desires are, To forgive them that trespass against us, as God hath forgiven us our trespasses against him.

I. G.

An Additional Postscript, farther manifesting the illegality of the late aforesaid Proceedings.

‘**A**N oath,’ saith Coke, ‘Third Part Institutes, chap. 74. p. 165; is an affirmation, or denial, by any Christian, of any thing lawful and honest, before one, or more, that have authority to give the same, for advancing of truth and right, calling Almighty God to witness that this testimony is true.’ And he farther saith, ‘No oath ought to be administered, but such as is allowed by the common law, or by act of parliament; neither can any oath be altered that is allowed by common law, or act of parliament, but what is altered by act of parliament.’ Note, An oath is an affirmation, or denial, which was not denied by us: he doth not say, by kissing the book, or any such like ceremony. Note again, The end of taking this oath, it is for advancement of truth and right, which is truly done by affirmation or denial, being solemnly spoken, as in God’s sight and presence; and our denial to take the oath in that way of imposed formality, yielding all just and due obedience, did no way hinder the advancement either of truth or right, obedience answering the end of the oath, and not swearing; and this signified by Coke’s definition of an oath.

Again, Justice Coke saith, ‘We that are judges speak upon our oaths, and therefore must deliver our judgments according to our consciences; and the fault, saith he, will lie upon us if it be illegal,
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and we deliver it for law. (Mark) The judges consciences, according to their oaths, are the ground of their judgments: then is not another man to exercise his judgment according to his conscience, though he doth not formally swear? Have judges only this privilege, in ministering or executing the law, and shall not another man have the like liberty of conscience, especially when he hath positive Scripture on his side, that saith, Swear not at all? And he farther saith, ' We that are judges, must not give our judgments according to policy, or rules of state, nor conveniences, but only according to law.' And without doubt, were the judges, and others, more strict in observing their oaths, others, by their example, might be induced to conclude, That there is something more in swearing, than now they believe to be; for unjust judges bring a contempt upon the law itself; as one said of the Greek tongue, who thought it a mockery to learn that language, the masters whereof lived in bondage: so marvel not, if some condemn the law, because the ministers thereof make it serve to gratify their lusts and evil wills; these, like spies, make use of their knowledge in the laws, to find out where they may enter, and how they may rob, insnare, and spoil, those for whom the laws are to be as preservatives from violence, and encouragers of virtue; and not nurseries of vice, as they are often made to be by the wits, and practices of evil magistrates; that so not only, *Ignorantia judicis est calamitas innocentis*, but also his knowledge is perverted to serve his will: and these can make laws to be in force, for punishment and destruction, but not for preservation; making them to kill and destroy, but not to protect; a thing no less horrid and cruel, than if the sun should burn without giving us light; or the earth serve only to bury, but not to feed and nourish

rish us: so do such judges and justices, when they have a mind to spoil and ruin, no laws of freedom are taken notice of them. It hath been said in times past, by those who have strictly observed former judges, that they were compared unto the twelve lions under Solomon's throne: Lions for their courage and boldness to assert the laws and privileges of Englishmen; and under the throne, because of their own subjection unto them: but how far these resemble such, who sat upon the late trial, and passed the sentence of *premunire*, I leave the wise in heart to judge, both by what is here presented concerning that trial, as also from those who were spectators and auditors of the same. It hath been said, that the laws of England are like Hercules's pillars, that have a *ne plus ultra* upon them, as well as they are pillars to Hercules: but surely by such pulls as these, in causing mens mouths to be stopped by the executioner when they are at the bar to make their defence, to preserve their liberties and estates, must needs shake those houses which have no other foundations to stand upon. Judges in former times, when there was no law for cases that sometimes fell out, forbore proceedings until a parliament was called to make laws, for it is a higher jurisdiction, *dare leges*, to give laws, than to minister, or rule by them. But these judges do shew dislike unto the laws already made, and that lately too, and on purpose against those persons called Quakers, that deny all oaths; which act of parliament sets down what fine shall be imposed, and no more, and all the penalties for the first, second, and third offences: but these judges, for the first offence, and that created by themselves too, will have all but life, as themselves said; and that too, to live in penury and misery; the means of

of livelihood, by their sentence, being to be taken away. Surely if the law of England be a merciful law, as they said it is, then they must needs be most unmerciful judges, who passed so severe a sentence, drawn from such merciful laws, as they said the laws of England are; and surely in this, the judges make their little finger, as was said, heavier than the late parliament's loins. But as execution is the life of the law, so the application of it to a proper subject, is the feet upon which it is to go: and if this rule had been observed, Popish recusants, and not true Protestants, would have been found to have been the persons intended in the statutes of King James, as aforesaid. But through mal-administration of laws, oftentimes, those are most hurt by them, for whom they were not made; and so comes judgment to be turned backward, and equity to fall in the streets; and this made the prophet take up a lamentation, and say, "Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage," &c. "The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright amongst men; they all lie in wait for blood: they hunt every man for his brother with a net," &c. Mic. vii. 1, 2, 4. And was it not thus when they sought to entrap the prophet Daniel, but could find nothing against him, save in the matters of his God? and this was the controversy in the prophet Hosea's time, chap. v. 1. "Hear ye this, O priests, and hearken, ye house of Israel, and give ear, O house of the king; for judgment is towards you; because you have been a snare upon Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor." And was it not the practice in those persecuting days mentioned in the Book of Martyrs, that when no snare nor net would do, then this was the question to them, What say you to the sacrament

ment of the altar? And by this, when all failed, they were sure to catch them. The like use, by the powers that are gone, was made of the engagement, and the oath of abjuration, and is now made of the oath of allegiance, by malicious magistrates; who when they can find no way to execute their cruelty upon the poor people called Quakers, then they cry, Give them the oath; and this is so frequent, that they tender it at their pleasure, and to whom they have a mind; knowing, when all snares fail, they can surely catch them in this; or, if all other laws be but like rods of wire, and the judges or justices have a mind to whip a man soundly, then they will, at their pleasure, tender the oath, and the refusal thereof, they will make to be as scorpions, by passing the sentence of *premunire* against them. What man can be safe, while judges and justices take this liberty to themselves, to decline laws of safety and moderation, and pick out, at their pleasure, laws of cruelty, to make whom they please to be concerned therein? For, by the same rule, they make true protestants to be concerned in those laws, made only for Popish recusants; as is manifest by the preambles and titles of the laws, and inflict the penalties upon them; may they not also make true and honest men to be transgressors of those laws, that are made for dishonest and unrighteous men, and inflict the penalties therein contained upon them, they being judges of the law, as they call themselves, and so may punish sober men, by the laws that are made for drunkards, as well as punish those that fear an oath, by those laws that were made to punish swearers and plotters, and such, like? As it is plain, those laws were made for such, and upon occasion of the gunpowder plot: but where were Popish recusants taken out of their meetings,

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and

and places of worship? And, when were any of them convicted by virtue of any of those laws, though made principally for them? Have not they that liberty which others are debarred of; Are they haled out of their meetings by armed men, without warrant or order, as the people called Quakers, and others, are? With whom are gaols, holes, and prisons now filled? With drunkards, with ballad-singers, with stage-players, and with swearers; or, with such as fear an oath, and dare not swear at all for conscience sake, in obedience to Christ's command? Are not these, and such as these, become, through the violence of evil men those that now must be separated from their families and employments, and thrust into gaols, and there become the companions of thieves and murderers, while impurity walks in the streets, and ungodliness shews itself with open face? Where is the sword of justice, that should not be borne in vain, but used for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well? If it be not drawn to execute judgment, will not the God of justice draw his sword of displeasure? And when he utters his voice, will not the beasts of the field tremble? Shall not the righteous God do righteously? "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, O ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling: kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way; when his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."

Let none judge nor condemn us, because we have recorded the court's miscarriages towards us, as, their commanding, that our mouths should be stopped, and such like; lest in so doing, they condemn the disciples and apostles of Christ, who in like manner have recorded the miscarriages of Herod,

Herod, Pilate, and others ; and the apostle Paul, who saith, Acts xxiii. 1, 2, 3. " Men and brethren, " I have lived in all good conscience before God " until this day," which was no canting, as I was accused for, " and the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him, to smite him on " the mouth," as we were commanded to have our mouths stopped : neither let it be thought by any, that these servants of God were not wholly dissolved into suffering principles, unto all long suffering and patience with joyfulness, notwithstanding their publication, and recording these things.

J. CROOK.

GLAD-TIDINGS PROCLAIMED

TO THE

UPRIGHT IN HEART,

WHO WALK IN THE LIGHT OF LIFE:

AND

JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED

AGAINST

BABYLON and her MERCHANTS,

WHOSE REWARDS MUST BE ACCORDING TO HER
WORKS.

DEAR Flock of my heavenly Father, whom he hath visited and chosen out of the world, to be his peculiar treasure; whose tears are bottled up, and whose groans are in remembrance before him, that he cannot withhold from doing you good: Oh ye faithful and valiant ones for his truth upon earth! He hath seen, he hath seen your afflictions, sufferings, and trials, and hath weighed them in the balance, and tempered your cups, that you may say of the bitterest of them, My God is the portion of this also. Hath he taken thy valiant men, and removed them hence? What is it for? Because of distaste that he hath taken against thee, or to bring thee,

thee, O Zion! to live in this life that never dies? The former is to be searched into; and according to the discovery from God therein, the deep sense is to be impressed upon thy spirit; that his will may be done, and his end answered. Shall I take up a lamentation, and say, How are thy mighty men fallen, or removed by death? And how hast thou been tried, O daughter of Zion! even since thy coming forth from amongst the pots, and since thou hast appeared out of the holes? Though thy days be but young, and thy beauty scarce discovered; yet how hast thou been hunted? Not only when thou wast in the wilderness, and desert land, but since thou art on thy way to Canaan: how hath Amalek vexed thee, and the nations every where been troubled at thee? Art thou born unto it? And must it always be so? Must war still follow war, and new tempests arise so soon as the calms appear? What, no time given thee to put on thy beautiful attire, and to shew thyself forth to the alluring of the nations? Yes surely, thou shalt have a day, and thy glory shall shine, and thy beauty and comeliness be made manifest, as well as thy blackness and deformity. He is but emptying thee from vessel to vessel, that thou mayest not taste of thy lees; but that thy words may be as new wine, to refresh the hearts of the mourners, and as apples of gold set in pictures of silver, to take the eyes of the beholders; that it may be known, that thy food is not that which will corrupt, but upon the tree of life, whose leaves shall heal the nations, and whose fruit shall not fail, but in every month and change be green. Oh then! why shouldst thou not be content, and thoroughly satisfied with all the dealings of thy God towards thee, and say, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth good in his

P 3

"fight;"

“ fight;” he will bring me forth, after he hath thoroughly purged me, and I shall shine as the sun in lustre, and triumph, after the darkest day, and thickest clouds: and then shalt thou see clearly, and understand the end of the Lord, as well in taking away thy mighty men, as all the rest of his dealings towards thee; how that it is not only from the evil to come, but that their blood might cry, now their bodies are dead, louder, and more powerful than when they were living: for know, O Zion! to thy comfort, and O Babylon! unto thy sorrow, that though their bodies be dead, their blood speaks, and the spillers thereof shall not escape in the day of the inquisition of the mighty God; for from his hand thou shalt have justice, and the nations shall know it and be ashamed and confounded for ever. For the spirit of the Lord is upon me, to proclaim glad tidings in thine ears, in the authority of his life, and dominion of his name; and to tell them, that thy warfare is nigh to be accomplished, and thy redemption out of the hands of all thine enemies, hastens; that thou shalt worship and serve thy God, in the beauty of holiness, and land of the living; when Babylon, with all her upholders and adherents, shall not have whereon to lay their heads, or set their feet; but as she hath dealt to Jerusalem, so shall it be measured to her again, “ The word of the Lord hath spoken it.” Only wait ye, wait ye in the shepherds tents, with the flocks of the companions, and these things you shall see assuredly brought to pass: and the time hastens, that he that hath wisdom shall read, and he that hath understanding, shall understand the number 666, and the name, and the number of the beast, and of his name; for it is the number of a man: he that can reckon, let him. The key to open this mystery, and to unlock this secret, is the brightness of

of the coming of the Son of Righteousness, shining unto the soul, to give the discovery of every motion of the spirit of man in the things of God; that it may pass no longer for the Spirit of God, but may be ceased from for ever, in praying, in speaking, with all the rest of God's worship and service; that all may be done by the spirit of his mouth, who hath the keys of David; and openeth, and none shutteth; and shutteth, and none openeth: then shall be read and distinguished the ministration from the ministrator, that when he removes, the ministration may not be adored, but the Lamb followed wherever he goes: so shall there be no more sea, but the former things shall be passed away, and a sea of glass mingled with fire, appear in the room thereof, and the followers of the Lamb standing by it, as with harps in their hands, and praise in their mouths, unto the Most High, that lives for ever.

Oh my dear friends, brethren and companions, whom my soul greeteth with these salutations of love and good tidings! What shall I say to you all, that may be as oil to make your faces shine, and wine to make your hearts glad, in the midst of all your besettings, huntings, and temptations? Your God sees, and beholds, and ponders all your trials; leave them all with him, and cast your care wholly upon him: for by all your care, not one cubit can be added to your stature. He will bring to pass his purpose, and your desires. O ye upright in heart! be faithful unto him, and follow those things that make for peace; and take heed of this present world, that neither its riches, its frowns, its fears, its sufferings, nor its pleasures, may move you out of your tents; but that the signs of the coming of the Son of Man may be always in your eye, lest either the marrying, or giving in marriage,

“ fight;” he will bring me forth, after he hath thoroughly purged me, and I shall shine as the sun in lustre, and triumph, after the darkeſt day, and thickeſt clouds: and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly, and underſtand the end of the Lord, as well in taking away thy mighty men, as all the reſt of his dealings towards thee; how that it is not only from the evil to come, but that their blood might cry, now their bodies are dead, louder, and more powerful than when they were living: for know, O Zion! to thy comfort, and O Babylon! unto thy ſorrow, that though their bodies be dead, their blood ſpeaks, and the ſpillers thereof ſhall not eſcape in the day of the inquiſition of the mighty God; for from his hand thou ſhalt have juſtice, and the nations ſhall know it and be aſhamed and confounded for ever. For the ſpirit of the Lord is upon me, to proclaim glad tidings in thine ears, in the authority of his life, and dominion of his name; and to tell them, that thy warfare is nigh to be accompliſhed, and thy redemption out of the hands of all thine enemies, haſtens; that thou ſhalt worſhip and ſerve thy God, in the beauty of holineſs, and land of the living; when Babylon, with all her upholders and adherents, ſhall not have whereon to lay their heads, or ſet their feet; but as ſhe hath dealt to Jeruſalem, ſo ſhall it be meaſured to her again, “ The word of the Lord hath ſpoken it.” Only wait ye, wait ye in the ſhepherds tents, with the flocks of the companions, and theſe things you ſhall ſee aſſuredly brought to paſs: and the time haſtens, that he that hath wiſdom ſhall read, and he that hath underſtanding, ſhall underſtand the number 666, and the name, and the number of the beaſt, and of his name; for it is the number of a man: he that can reckon, let him. The key to open this myſtery, and to unlock this ſecret, is the brightneſs
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riage, spoken of, or the beating of the fellow-servants, do overtake any of you; and then the kingdom of heaven be indeed like unto ten virgins, five wise, and five foolish.

These things are written, not to upbraid any, but to forewarn all, that they stir not out of their tents; but dwell continually in the lowly mind, preferring one another before themselves; cherishing the good in all, and strengthening the weak hands; dwelling as Saviours upon Mount Zion; for it is easy to judge and condemn, but hard to save, so shall ye be known to be children of the Most High, and as epistles written upon one anothers hearts, seen and read of all men; and the blessed presence of your Father will be with you, and his glory will not cease to rest upon you: which is the desire of my travailing soul for you all; who am

Your brother and companion,

In the faith and patience of Jesus,

JOHN CROOK,

From visiting my Father's
children, the 17th of the
12th month, 1662.

A TRUE

A TRUE AND FAITHFUL

T E S T I M O N Y

CONCERNING

JOHN SAMM,

The Servant of the LORD,

Who finished his Course, by laying down his Life
in Northampton Gaol, for the Truth of JESUS,
the 16th of the 1st month, 1664.

Dearly beloved of the Lord,

ALTHOUGH many of you are not ignorant of the departure of John Samm out of the body, and for what cause he was in outward bonds, which was for meeting with the servants of the Lord, and what his life and conversation was, together with the ministry committed to him by the Lord, as well as his faithful discharge thereof, is well known unto you: and I might be silent, if this were the only end, to tell you of these things; for is there such a stranger in Israel, among you all, as knows them not? But notwithstanding, I have a testimony in my heart, from the Lord, on this behalf, and do desire it may find acceptance with you, to stir up your pure minds, to be sensible of the Lord's dealings with you in your own particulars; and also of his providences and disposings of those, that are near and dear unto you all, as I know this servant of the

the Lord John Samm was, unto all that thoroughly knew him, and had inward acquaintance with him.

For his education, it is well known in Bedfordshire where he dwelt: as also his conversation, which was just and honest among men, before he was convinced of the truth; for the sake of which he suffered five or six times imprisonment at several times, for bearing testimony to the same truth, which at last he sealed with his life in Northampton gaol, where he first suffered imprisonment, about the year 1656, in which prison he ended his days, as he foretold, saying, Northampton was the first, and will be the last.

For his life and conversation, I can speak to it, for I was perfectly acquainted with him, both outwardly as a man, and inwardly as a Christian; as a man, he was endowed with a competent measure of understanding, and did improve it, unto that end, in the managing of the creation, for which it was given him; being discreet, sober, and of good report among men, and his carriage courteous and loving unto all. Much more might be said of this nature, which I omit.

And as a Christian, he was holy and harmless, patient, and meek, valiant and bold, contending earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and in which he himself, as a saint, did walk, live, and die: Christianity to him, was not a talk, but a life; for rather than he would deny it, he suffered loss of estate, liberty, and life itself: witness his often imprisonment, and his laying down his life at last for the same cause.

As a minister, he had a dispensation of the gospel committed unto him, in which he was a faithful labourer in the work thereof, with great zeal and fervency of spirit, taking all opportunities and occasions in the wisdom of the Lord, as moved by him,

him, to deliver his message unto all people, of all estates and degrees, that he might be free from the blood of all men.

His gift was large, his utterance plain to be understood, his words savoury and powerful, not painted with man's wisdom, but as given him of the Lord, being often spoken with great majesty, and in much authority, cutting deep to the wounding of the wicked one in man, and easing of the poor and needy prisoner, being often mindful of the captive daughter of Zion, as of the pure feed in deep captivity, that he might reach it help; and when his words began to reach it, he was as one transported with joy; and when it was once raised, and come forth of the prison-house, the song of Moses, and of the Lamb, was in his mouth, with much joy, and great gladness of heart, unto the astonishment of the wicked, and filling the hearts of the righteous with great joy, through the overflowings of his cup, and aboundings of God's love in his heart: in which state his face was full of dread, and did speak as one having authority, and not as the Scribes: besides, the melody of his voice, sometimes founding out the high praises of the God of Israel; and at other times, the blessed state of the righteous, as they stood in union with the living God, and one with another. Oh! how have I seen him make the earth to tremble, and the hearts of the upright to overflow with joy and gladness, through that abundance of life that hath run through his vessel, unto the forcing of water out of the rocks, and tears out of the eyes of the saints, unto great abundance: his hymns and sounds, sometimes were as flames of fire, consuming the drossy matter, and at other times, as swords and spears, cutting down, and thrusting through the tall cedars, and lofty oaks,
and

and wild beasts of the wilderness: which did echo to the true seed in the living babes, and often made sweet melody in their assemblies, when but few words were spoken by him.

Methinks I hear his instrument still found,
 Making the hearts of the just to abound
 With living praises to the God of heaven,
 Without one jarring string, or voice uneven:
 Tho' this seems strange to those that dwell below,
 Yet what I speak, I feel, and well do know;
 And look for more to be brought forth e'er long,
 In those that yet are learning the Lamb's song.

*An Exhortation unto all the Righteous, especially those
 that were Partakers of John Samm's Ministry.*

DID Joseph seek a place where to weep over Benjamin his brother, though yet alive? And can ye, O ye sons and daughters of Joseph, refrain from mourning for the loss of a father to many children, whom he had begotten in the Lord? And is there a time when the true ambassador of peace may weep bitterly? Oh! Can it be more seasonable at any time, than when the Lord takes away the righteous? And hath he not done so to many valiants of late, whose trumpets alarmed the world, and made many dead to arise at the sound thereof? What was the cause, and wherefore the Lord hath done it, becomes every one to make inquiry in their own hearts; and the rather, because there is need, yea, great need, of valiants in this day, the harvest being great, and the labourers

bourers few. And why the Lord should lessen the number, seems to challenge a diligent inquiry at every one's hand, to find out the cause thereof: and let me stir ye up, Oh! all ye that love the Lord, to search every one his own heart, with the light of Jesus: and for this, let my harp also be turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep: for indeed I will tell you, Oh ye children of my Father! my soul hath deeply considered this matter. And I have this answer, The Lord will do what pleaseth him, with the instruments of his choosing; And who hath been his counsellor? He will raise up, and lay aside, at pleasure; for he will have no idols of jealousy in this his day, lest it come to pass, as when he made the brazen serpent at Nehushtan: neither will he have his work neglected, nor his servants slighted, whom he sends forth in life and power: he would have his people to wait upon him in their own measures, every one as they have received, in it to keep close unto him, that they all may be taught of him, and have the rejoicings in themselves, and not in another. And the Lord will yet raise up instruments to fulfil his purpose, for his work shall prosper. And by all these ways and dealings of his, he would have his childrens hearts made loose to all things under the sun, with their lamps burning, and lights shining, having the loins of their minds girt about with the girdle of truth; keeping close unto the Lord with a pure heart, that he may yet further make known unto them his mind and will; for although you are now become the sons of God, it doth not yet appear what ye shall be; but this know, the more and oftener ye see him, the liker to him ye shall be: and let this be your care, that he may be always before you, that you may not be moved. And, my dear friends, keep low in your minds,

minds, and delight to be often in the deeps with God: Oh watch! I even beseech you all, as dear brethren, that by the Lord's taking away of his servants of late, that have been blessed instruments in his hands, you may come the nearer unto that teacher, and hear his voice daily, which cannot be removed into a corner; that ye may all say, in truth of heart, we are come unto that ministry which cannot be taken away by reason of death: Oh that you may all feel more of this ministry in your assemblies daily, and keep in that seed of life, where you live with the spirits of those just men, whose bodies are removed from you: indeed I feel, I feel the Lord mightily at work in this his day; be but still, and you will see his wonders as in the days past: let love abound among you, as at the beginning, and be pure and clean in heart, and you will see, by all God's dealings, what he aims at, which is certainly to raise up his own life in you all, over all the world, unto his own praise, and your joy for ever. And all you that are sensible of the taking away of dear J. S. as being often refreshed by his life, and comforted through his ministry: sink ye down, sink ye down, into the fountain, from whence he had all his supplies; and drink ye of the same, blessing the Lord, that the fountain is in Christ the promised seed, unto whom feel your daily access: Oh ye beloved of the Lord! And say in your hearts with my soul, O God! it is enough that we have thyself to go unto; and that we can in thy life, enjoy communion with the spirits of the just ones: and lift up your heads over all the world, and be not dismayed with any amazement, either inward or outward, for your Redeemer lives, and your ransom will not tarry. And you that are full of
sorrow,

sorrow, by reason of your temptations and trials, which are many, and that your own strength is so small; I say unto you all, Lift up your heads; for you that cannot live without Christ, but feel your daily need of him, he will not leave you, nor forsake you; for thou art a true heir of him, that canst not live without him; to thee he will come, and will not tarry; and in the mean time, as a good soldier, endure the hardship: it is but yet a little while, and he will appear without sin unto thy soul's salvation: for I feel thee, and do travail for thee.

Oh thou well-beloved! How are my cries unto my God for thee, who laments in thy spirit for want of the Lord, and can hardly be persuaded of his love to thee, thou art so uncomely in thine own eyes, and thou lookest upon his dealings, both within, in thy spirit, and without, in his taking away those instruments whom thou lovest, and by whom thou wast refreshed, as being in wrath against thee, and for thy sake: well I know thee, and am to testify unto thee, in mine, and thy Father's name, that he doth behold thee, and his eyes do pity thee, and he is waiting to be gracious unto thee, that in an acceptable time he may commend his love unto thee, and thy salvation is sure, Oh thou travailing soul! And I could even put my soul in thy soul's stead, to ease thee a little.

Well, my cries are for thee, and it is prayed that thy faith fail not: so unto our God give up, and when thou art sinking, as to the bottom of sorrow, there is a hand to support thee, and thou wilt feel it in the lowest dungeon, and darkest deep. Be thou still, and my God will be thy interpreter, to let thee see, know, and understand thy

thy state and condition ; with whom I leave thee,
 in that bosom where Lazarus dwells safely, and
 at rest, when *Dives* is tormented, and hath not one
 drop of that mercy with which thou art filled, to
 the praise of our God for ever. Amen.

N A

AN
E P I S T L E

OF

PEACE AND GOOD-WILL

*Unto all the Children of the LORD, against this
Suffering Time.*

DEAR lambs of the living God, for I know you are so, because the wolves are so greedy to destroy you, I have a message from the great Bishop and Shepherd of your souls, unto you all; and in his fear and name I am faithfully to deliver it.

Thus saith the Lord, the mighty God, and great shepherd of the flocks of Israel, be ye not dismayed with any amazement, neither be ye afraid, because of the multitude of wolves, and wild beasts of prey, that seek to devour you: for thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, saying, Like as the lion, or young lion, roareth upon the prey that he hath gotten, and is not afraid, though the multitudes of shepherds cry out upon him; neither is abased, for all the heap of them: So shall the Lord of Hosts come down to fight for Mount Zion, and defend his hills: like as the birds flutter about their nests, so shall the Lord of Hosts keep, save, defend, and deliver Jerusalem; and whatever may come to pass, it shall only try you, but not destroy

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you:

you: for I will not leave you, nor forsake you, saith the Lord; but you shall be mine, and I will save you all, whose trust is in me the living God, as a man saveth his only son that serveth him. But as I have already in measure shewed you, what man is in his best estate, and the son of man with all his endowments of wit and parts, learning, and understanding, strength, and policy, together with all his experiences and observations, which is out of my fear and counsel, so I will yet manifest unto you, farther, the vanity and helplessness of man, and the son of man, how that he is not to be accounted of: and all for this end, that you may cease from him, and no more lean upon his arm, neither within nor without, nor go down into Egypt for help; for it shall be known, that the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit. Oh my people, saith the Lord! remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim even to Gilgal, that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord; and how I have appeared for you from time to time, and followed you from prison to prison, saith the Lord, with my life and presence; and from east to west I have been with you, as I have called you, and sent you forth by sea and land, ye have seen my wonders, according as my providence hath ordered any of you; and in sickness and health, I have been with you, that many of you can say, and bear witness for me, that I have made your weak, infirm, and tender bodies strong, and to endure more hardship and sufferings, than ever you could have believed they had been able to have gone through. And also, I have made you willing to forsake your dearest relations, and
to

to choofe rather to be in a noifome prifon, than to dwell in your cieled houfes, without my joy and peace in your hearts: and this ye know right well.

Now, my people, faith the Lord, remember thofe things, that ye may follow on to know me more and more, for I change not: but as I have been with you in all ftates and conditions, fo I will be with you unto the end; and will bring wo and miſery upon all your enemies, that decree unrighteous decrees againſt you; they ſhall not be able to bring to paſs their purpoſe, faith the Lord; for I will be-fool them, and then make their own folly to correct them; and they ſhall ſee it, and be aſhamed; but ſhall not be able to help themſelves, nor deliver their own ſouls. But for you, my people, faith the Lord, that dwell in my fear, and give all unto me, keeping nothing back in hypocrify, I will be with you, and in you; and your enemies ſhall ſee you increaſe in power and great glory, as gazers upon you, but not be able to hinder you.

While I am ſpeaking of it, my heart melts within me, and the joy of my God overcomes me; only I muſt not forbear to write theſe things unto you, becauſe required thereunto by the Lord. Be ye ſtill, and ye ſhall all know him, from the leaſt to the greateſt, and he will not forget any one of you, be thou never ſo little, poor and weak in thine own eyes: but the hypocrites ſhall be bound hand and foot, ſo that all their neſts and holes ſhall not hide them, and ſhall be caſt into thick darkneſs; that as they ſhall not be able to find their hands to help themſelves, ſo ſhall they not have an eye to ſee any way to eſcape the juſt hand and judgment of the Lord: but the upright in heart ſhall now be known in this day of trial, who have none but the Lord alone, to truſt unto, and lean upon; theſe ſhall ſee the ſalvation of God,

and praise his holy name, for this pure separating day of his love unto them, but of judgment unto all the hypocrites in Zion. My exhortation from the Lord unto you all, is, to keep low in your hearts and minds, close unto his light that by it unto the seed of life ye may be led, in it to have your dwelling day and night, where no evil tidings come, as you know right well, and in this ransomed seed keep your meetings, so will they be full of glory, unto the astonishing of all that come among you; that it may now be known unto all people, that we are those whom the Most High hath chosen to write his name upon, as that city of God, in which he delights to dwell, that the little sister, scattered upon the face of the earth, which hath no breasts, may now be thought upon, and that tidings of deliverance may be sounded in her ears, in all nations, whither she is driven; that she may flock, as the doves unto the windows, through the hearing of the joyful sound, that the mighty God is risen in a poor and afflicted people in England, who cannot bow to any graven image, nor give their power unto the beast, but will follow the Lamb wherever he goeth; choosing rather to die with him, than to forsake him.

And, dear friends and brethren, my farther exhortation to you all, from the Lord of Hosts, is, that you all now do live in that truth, which you have both heard, and spoken of to others, that so your union in the life and power may stand: then will you be strong as Mount Zion, and an help one to another; the strong taking the weak by the hand, saying, I feel thee, and therefore cannot leave thee behind, but must have thee along with me: and this will not only increase your number, but discourage your enemies, when they see you keep your meetings, and worship the God
of

of Daniel, as at other times. And what though you are carried to prisons by droves and flocks, and sent wheresoever your enemies have power? Will not that their hour and power of darkness, be the hour in which the Father will glorify himself? Yes, it will; for the Lord hath spoken it: and by this shall all men know you are Christ's disciples, not as Judas, to betray him, or deny him before men; but, because you love him, and keep his commandments; and they are not grievous unto you, though men would make them so to their power, by their pains and punishments.

And I am further to declare unto you, in the name of my God, for your comfort, and your enemies torment, that he is bringing forth a birth in you, his people, which fears not death; for it hath, in despite of all death's power, passed through death's country and regions, as a conqueror, through the strength of Jesus, and is now passed into life and immortality, where it dwells safely, in love and peace with all men; not at all fearing what they can do unto it, having already tried the strength of him, that is the power of death, which is the devil. And this birth is that which is and shall be more and more as an army terrible with banners, to affright the wicked, when they see that there is no conquering by death or banishment, because death itself is conquered by that birth immortal, in which you dwell and inhabit. Oh blessed birth of the morning of the everlasting day of the Most High! Sing ye, sing ye; and again, I say, Sing ye the songs of the Lamb, and rejoice ye in the mighty God; for he lives, that will crown ye; and he abides faithful, that cannot deny himself, who is your God and helper for ever; unto whom I am joined with, and in whom I dearly salute you, and embrace you all, who are faithful witnesses unto

the name and truth of the Lord, in this trying, but not destroying, day: I behold thee, O Zion, beautiful as the sun, and glorious as the noon-day, in despite of all clouds and darkness, in the pure promised heavenly feed, in thee revealed and made manifest, unto the endless praise of thy God, over all the world, and powers of darkness, for evermore.

These things I was commanded to write unto you, in the opening Spirit of life, where I am one with you all, in the meek suffering of the Lamb, who am now in outward bonds, though in perfect inward freedom, for the name and testimony of Jesus:

Your brother and companion in the
faith and patience of the Lamb,

JOHN CROOK.

Let this be read in the pure fear of the Lord, in all the assemblies of the first-born.

Ipswich Town Gaol, this 28th
of the 3d Month, 1664.

TO

T O T H E

K I N G

A N D

HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

Who have made laws and decrees, and caused them to be put in execution, to restrain and prohibit people from having the liberty of their consciences in the exercise of the worship of God, this is sent as a warning from the Lord.

Friends,

WHAT do you mean by these practices? Or what do you expect to bring to pass by these your undertakings and proceedings? Do you think thereby to root out the holy seed, Christ Jesus, and royal offspring of God, which he hath raised and brought forth in these north parts of the world, to rule and reign, according to his promise made by the mouths of his prophets in ages past, to which nations must bow and bend, and become subject? I tell you plainly and truly, that if this be your expectation, which your proceedings give me cause to believe it is, you will certainly fail therein; and God will assuredly frustrate these your expectations; and by this very way and means that you take to suppress and root out the people of God from having a being amongst you, even thereby you will provoke the Lord to root you out, if you persist therein: wherefore beware, lest that

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which

which you think, and expect, to bring upon the people of God, be by the hand of God brought upon yourselves. For, be it known unto you, the Lord God Almighty is with his people of a truth, whom you have turned your sword and power against; and what is done unto them, he certainly takes as done unto himself: and in as much as you go about to suppress his people, or to limit them in the exercise of their consciences towards God, you therein are found fighters against God, and thereby you go about to stop and hinder the work of God; which will be as hard for you to do, as it was for Saul to kick against the pricks of the witness of God in his own conscience. Wherefore consider these things, and remember that many warnings, and tender visitations of love, the Lord hath sent unto you in times past, which you have little regarded hitherto, but go on exercising cruelty towards the people of God. And now at this time also I am moved, and it is upon my heart, by the Spirit of the Lord, to lay these things before you, and do tell you in plainness, what the Lord will do, and bring to pass, in despite of all that you can do who seek to oppose him: for, notwithstanding the many laws and decrees which you have made, or shall make, yet the work of the Lord, which he hath certainly begun, that shall go on and increase, and the truth must flourish and prosper, and spread forth itself, and the kingdoms of the world must become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, according to his promise: and they that will not bow unto his throne and government, who is the KING of kings, whose right is to rule in the consciences of people, and to bear the government there, and to exercise them in matters of worship towards God, but will seek to stop and limit him and his government there; even such must and shall

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be broken by him, and bruised under by his eternal power; the Lord hath said and spoken it, and it must come to pass.

Wherefore friends, be you once more warned, that you meddle no more with the consciences of people, so as to go about to limit them in matters relating to the service of God, for it is not the place of a civil magistrate to meddle, or to have to do, with those things, but leave them free, in those things, to do as they are persuaded in their own consciences, by the light of the Spirit of the Lord; for you cannot give an account unto God for them, if they do amiss, but they must all, and so must you also, give an account unto God, every one for himself: and this is just and equal, that, in things of this nature, every one should be left to the exercise of the Spirit of the Lord in his own heart; because that spiritual worship consisteth in obedience to the Spirit of God, and you yourselves would not be willing to be prohibited from, or denied of this liberty; but, I dare say, you would look upon it to be a very great oppression unto you, to be restrained, by any civil power or government, from that, which by the Spirit and power of God, you were persuaded in your consciences you ought to do; and you could not but judge, that those, who should go about to lay, or impose such a restriction upon you, did do unto you, as they themselves would not be done by; and so ye might well conclude, that it was unrighteousness in them so to do: wherefore, if you seriously consider, whether this unrighteousness and oppression be not found in you, I know you cannot but lay your hands upon your mouths, and confess, guilty.

So let my counsel be, at this time, received by you, and take my advice, as from one that hath
received

received the counsel of the Lord, and, in measure, knows the mind of the Lord by the revelation of his Spirit, as touching this matter, that is this; shake yourselves out of these cruel practices, of persecuting about religion and worship, and lay aside these cruel impositions, which are and have been laid upon the people of God, by reason whereof, many, who are dear unto the Lord, have suffered very greatly; some the loss of their liberties, and some the loss of their lives, occasioned through being thrust together in noisome holes and prisons, and others are obnoxious to exilement from their wives and children, and from their native country and dearest relations; and no evil at all justly charged against any of these, for which these cruel sufferings are inflicted upon them; it is only for worshipping of God in spirit, that these sufferings are sustained by them; that is the greatest charge that hath been by you at all proved against them; and for these things the Lord's controversy is certainly great with you, and will you continue in these things, through which you have provoked the Lord to anger? His wrath will not be appeased towards you, neither can your government be established in safety, nor you cannot establish yourselves in safety and security, for fear will surprize you, while you go on in these practices, because of the guilt that is upon your consciences; and although we cannot, neither dare we to make outward opposition against you by plottings and insurrections, &c. Out of which things God Almighty hath redeemed us, and hath brought us into his covenant of peace, and unto his mountain of holiness, where nothing hurts nor destroys, yet we know that the Lord is with us, and on our side, and takes our part, will plead our cause, and fight for us, and he is stronger than you all; and his power is above yours,

yours, and our trust and confidence is in him alone, and not in the arm of flesh; and it is in vain for you to strive against him, or to oppose or resist him; for he will in the end be too hard for you, and will break you to pieces as a potter's vessel of clay, except you repent.

And now friends, this is the way by which you may or can possibly escape, and prevent the dreadful judgments of the Lord, or by which his anger may be appeased which is kindled against you, and that is this, To humble yourselves before the Lord, and to repent of the evil of your doings, and to loose the bands of iniquity, and to undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, and turn the sword against the evil-doers, and suppress vice and profaneness, and do not tolerate licentiousness, and those wicked practices, as rioting, drunkenness, stage-plays, and the like, which day by day even greatly abound in the streets, while the servants of the Lord lie in noisome holes and prisons: and give liberty of conscience unto the people of God to worship him, which is the main thing that I contend with you for, that the servants of the Lord may have free liberty to labour for the reducing of people from those afore-mentioned, and all other vices, which tend to the destruction of youth, and to the destroying both of soul and body. And this is the way for you to obtain the good-will and favour of God, and to be established in safety and security in your government; and if any, who are self-seekers and time-servers, shall, for self-ends, counsel you otherwise, such you shall know in the day of the Lord, are evil counsellors, and ought not to be received by you, but denied.

And friends, one thing more I would present to your consideration, which hath been often laid before you in times past, and as oft forgotten by you;
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which is this, What hath been the ground and original cause of all the late overturnings which have been in this nation? If it be rightly weighed and considered, will it not appear, that cruelty and oppression of mens consciences, in matters relating to the service of God, was the main original cause thereof? I confess, I cannot but marvel that you should be so blinded, with your present prosperity, that you cannot see and consider these things, and labour to avoid that which was the cause of their overthrow and ruin, that are gone before you, but to run on so headlong and inconsiderate, as though you were hastening with desire to bring the wrath of God upon you. For mark, friends, When did any escape the hand of God in any age or generation? Or, Where were any established in safety, that took in hand this work of oppression, and persecuting the seed of God and his people? Consider from Pharaoh, that great oppressor, unto this day, and you will find, that in all ages, this work of persecuting and oppressing the people of God, was the very cause of the overthrow and ruin of the persecutors; as for instance, the great persecution and cruelty that was exercised by the then powers of the nation in Queen Mary's days: What was the issue thereof? Was it not the very overthrow and rooting out of that persecuting power, religion, and faith? &c. And doth not their name, who exercised that cruelty, remain as an ill savour unto all sober people, truly fearing God, unto this day? And could they, by all their tyranny then exercised, root out or extinguish that faith and religion that they then struck at? Nay, they could not, though it was but, as I may say, the beginning of reformation, and coming out of the apostacy; but it is true indeed, they killed, destroyed, and murdered many, but, blessed be the Lord, that did not shake the rest, so as to make

make them fall, but rather establish them. And certainly friends, although you should be permitted, as they were, to destroy many of us by your laws and decrees, made, or to be made, yet you cannot thereby destroy the faith of others; neither can you possibly accomplish your desire, nor root out the holy seed which is now sprung and risen, and must replenish nations, and cause the desolate places to be inhabited, though indeed you may thereby root out and destroy yourselves; which is sad to consider.

So friends, much more might be said unto you, and many sound reasons and arguments might be produced to convince you, how unsafe it is for you to persevere in this work of persecution and cruelty; but I know you will, many of you, if not most of you, kick against it, and harden your hearts, and will not believe; wherefore I have chosen rather to be as brief as I may, only to discharge my conscience to you in the sight of the Lord, that I may be clear of your blood, and so shall conclude even with a few words, telling you, That this work which you have begun, and put your hand unto, will be too hard for you; for when did ever any yet rise up against the Lord and prosper? Or, do you think to prevail against the Ancient of Days, although your predecessors could not? O nay, it cannot be. But then you will say, That it is not the work of God that you oppose, but heresy and sedition, &c. I answer, so said your predecessors, the persecutors in all generations, when they slew the prophets, and crucified the Son of God, and persecuted the apostles; they charged them with blasphemy and sedition, and turners of the world upside down, and said, The earth was not able to bear them, &c. Yet that could not be a sufficient excuse for them, in the day when God took vengeance

geance, neither will it be a sufficient excuse for you in the day when you must all, without respect of persons, give an account unto God for all your deeds done in the body : wherefore beware lest that come upon you, which was spoken by the prophet of old, saying, " Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, " and perish ; for I work a work in your days, a " work which you can in no wise believe, though " a man declare it unto you."

I am a friend to the whole creation of God, and have the mind of the Spirit of the Lord, who wills not the death or destruction of any, but rather that all should return and live,

Written at Kingston upon
Thames, the fifth of the
ninth month, 1664.

J. CROOK.

SOME

SOME REASONS

Why the People called Quakers do absent from the Publick Way of Worship, and cannot conform thereunto, though they are exposed to great Sufferings because thereof.

AND ALSO

Why they cannot Swear at all; and whether it be out of Obstinacy or Conscientiousness, resolved.

Presented in the Love and Fear of the Lord, to the Serious Consideration of all Justices, and all others, who are moderately inquiring into this Matter.

WE are a people that have desired, and diligently inquired after the true knowledge of God, and the way in which he is worshipped; in which way we desire to walk: and after much seeking, and serious consideration, we do find, and are persuaded in our hearts and consciences,

First, That God is a Spirit, and that his worship is spiritual; according as Christ hath said, John iv. 24. And that none are true worshippers, but such as worship in the Spirit, and in Truth.

Secondly, That men must first feel and receive a measure of the Spirit of the Lord, before they can come to know the true way of worship, which is only learned in the Spirit, ver. 22, 23.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That no man upon the earth, can or ought to prescribe how, or after what manner, God Almighty is to be worshipped, so as to impose any practices upon men; but is to leave that to him, to direct them by his good Spirit, in things pertaining to his worship; and he is to persuade them thereunto: and that they ought not to be compelled or forced to the true worship; much less to that which is so justly suspected by many people, not to be the true way of worship.

And it doth appear to us, that the publick way of worship, or the worship of the church of England, is very much different from this spiritual worship: for we do see, that they have not received the measure of the Spirit of Christ, which leads into all truth, but they do daily rebel and transgress against it, doing those things that they should not, and leaving undone those things which they ought to do; so that they are without spiritual health: and these cannot be the spiritual worshippers; for they that do worship in the spirit, do feel health and peace in it. And therefore we have good reason to absent from the publick way of worship.

And because that those, that do frequent that worship, are not born again of the Spirit of Christ, John iii. 3. but are still in an unregenerate state, following the pleasures and vanities of sin, and do live in all manner of wickedness, as swearing, lying, drunkenness, whoredom, murder, cozening, and cheating, and what other evils may be mentioned, which may be found among those worshippers; and these are the works and fruits of the flesh, and not of the Spirit of God, Gal. v. And therefore we do absent from that worship.

Besides, they do not seek to draw and win people by love and tenderness, and by the example of a good conversation, but do labour by violent force
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and compulsion, to bring people to their worship; which the true worshippers and Christians never did; and do persecute, and cause such to suffer, who are otherwise minded, that cannot come to their church and worship, according to their prescriptions; which the true worshippers never did, but said, "If any were otherwise minded, God should reveal the same unto them," Phil. iii. 15. and they did not by force impose their religion upon others. But we do believe, that that way of imposing of religion upon people, is of Antichrist; and that all that ever do so impose, are in the way of Antichrist; and we do, and must, absent from them.

And also, we find their ministry is much different from the ministry of the true church of Christ, both in call, maintenance, doctrine, and conversation; for they were "ministers of the spirit, and not of the letter," 2 Cor. 3. Neither were they called by man, nor taught by man the things which they did preach; neither did they "receive it from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," Gal. i. and they had "received his Spirit, by which the deep things of God are revealed," 1 Cor. ii. But these ministers are made at Oxford or Cambridge, by learning natural languages, and old books and authors, and serve such a time there, before they go forth; and when they have attained that, then they run, when the Lord never sent them; and they use their tongues, and say, He saith it, when the Lord never spoke to them, nor called them forth to preach his word; but they are made ministers by man, and sent out by man, and two or three hundred pounds a year calls them thither; and there they will stay for their bellies: and such the true prophets and servants of the Lord witnessed against, as may be seen,

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Isa. lvi.

Isa. lvi. Jer. xxiii. Mic. iii. And the ministers of Christ did give freely, as they had freely received, according to Christ's command, Matt. x. But these ministers receive and force tithes from the people, which Christ came to put an end to, Rom. x. 4. And the apostle said, "The priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law;" by which law, tithes were paid, Heb. vii. which the ministers of Christ never received, much less to force people to pay them, but did witness against them; for they pertained only to the priests of the first covenant: and so in their maintenance we find them contrary to the ministers of Christ. And also they differ in their doctrine; for the ministers of Christ did preach, that people might wait to receive Christ into their hearts, and that they might know Christ in them, else they were reprobates; and if Christ was in them, the body was dead because of sin, and they came to be dead unto sin: and every particular member of their church was to know the Spirit of Christ in them; "and if any man had not the Spirit of Christ, he was none of his," &c. Rom. viii. But these ministers tell the people, that they are Christians, and the church of Christ; though they know nothing of this in them, but do live wickedly, in sin and unrighteousness, and are dead to truth, and feel nothing of the operation of the Spirit of Christ in them, but do still sin against it, doing that they should not do, and leaving undone that which they should do, and are not saved from sin, nor made free by the truth; and they tell them, they must never expect to be free from sin, nor to know the revelation of Jesus Christ, as former Christians did, nor to know the power of God, to work mightily and effectually in them, to destroy the works of the Devil, while they are on this side
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the grave; and so still keep them in blindness and ignorance, ever learning, but still laden with sin, and divers lusts, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, which makes free, as we have seen; and therefore we have denied them: and we do believe, with the ministers of Christ, that the truth makes free; and that it is possible to know Christ so made manifest within, as to destroy the Devil's works, and to save from sin; and that he that is born of God, sins not: we say, we believe that such a state is attainable on this side the grave; and yet we do acknowledge, there is a state the saints knew, and passed through, in which, if we should say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; but if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness: and thus was spoken to little children in the truth, that they should not sin, John ii. But there were fathers, that had known the truth, and young men, that were strong, in whom the word of God dwelt, that had (take notice) overcome the wicked one. Many other things might be mentioned, but these may be sufficient to shew, why we deny that ministry, which hath not profited the people at all; but they are proud and covetous, as thousands do know.

Again, we do absent from the publick way of worship, because of its deadness and formality; because we cannot find, that the immortal souls of people are refreshed therein, nor that true and spiritual comfort is received thereby: and we do believe, and upon true search and examination, do find, and also are persuaded in our consciences, and that by the Spirit of the Lord, that the most part of their ceremonies and practices, in their worship, are but vain traditions of men, and no

heavenly divine institutions; and we may say, as the apostle said in another case, "They do not" make the comers thereunto any whit the better;" but they are still miserable and dead, and want that which only can give life and satisfaction to the soul; to wit, the knowledge of Christ's appearance in themselves, and of his life and virtue. We might mention many ceremonies and practices, and speak particularly to them, but we would not be too tedious, but do speak as to the whole in these few words.

And having seen these things, that they want the Spirit of the Lord to exercise them in their worship; that they are not born of it; that they want the fruits of it; that they force and persecute people, that cannot for conscience sake conform to their way of worship; that their ministry differs from the ministry of Christ, in call, maintenance, conversation and doctrine, and is the very same with the false prophets and deceivers in the days of old, being found in their very steps and practices, &c. That their worship is dead, formal, and carnal, and doth not give satisfaction to the soul: We cannot conform to it, but have denied it upon just ground, and in conscience to the Lord do absent from it; and not out of obstinacy, as some would accuse us.

And again, we do absent from it, because we have found a better way, in which we can trust our souls: and do find health and peace, and spiritual comfort, and true satisfaction, in this way in which we now walk with the Lord, and do worship him in spirit and truth; and we do find his living presence in our assemblings together, in the worship and service of God: for we meet together to wait upon him, and to perform holy duty to him, and do speak as his Spirit moveth in

in us, and gives us utterance, and to pray in the Spirit, and this only is acceptable to him: and this is spiritual worship, when the Spirit of the Lord exerciseth man in the things he performeth towards God; and if his Spirit doth not stir or move in us, we are silent, waiting to hear the Lord speaking in our souls; and this is according to the saints practice. And because we have found great peace and satisfaction to our souls in this way, in which we now walk, we cannot deny it, whatever we suffer; and we do choose rather to obey the Lord, that we may have and feel his peace in our hearts, than to obey men, to avoid all sufferings.

And because we would not lose that peace, and make shipwreck of our faith, we cannot conform to the publick way of worship; and not out of any wilfulness or obstinacy: and we do desire to spend our days in the fear of God, and to walk in justness and righteousness towards all men, and to do unto all men as we would they should do unto us; and to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourselves; and to avoid the sinful and gross iniquities and abominations that do daily abound among those that are of the publick way of worship. And we dare not riot in the day time, nor spend our precious time in vanity, nor waste God's good creatures, and spend them upon our lusts, which will be the cause of God's severe judgments to come upon men and nations; and we cannot go with multitudes to do evil, but must have respect to the Lord God that made us, to live unto him, that we may die in his love and favour, and that we may be heirs of that kingdom which is everlasting; into which the sayers Lord, Lord, must not enter, but those that do his will. And this that we seek, and which is our only end

and aim, the Lord knows; and if for this we must be hated and afflicted, we cannot help it: for we must not deny the Lord, but will trust in him, though we die and perish outwardly for our obedience unto him; and because this is our desire and resolution, we do absent from the publick way of worship, and cannot have fellowship with the unfruitful workers and works of darkness, but do rather reprove them.

And as for our refusing to Swear:

We would have all men to know, That it is not out of obstinacy or wilfulness, that we do refuse, or as though we had any reserve to ourselves, because we cannot swear allegiance to the king, as if we would plot or contrive mischief against him: No, God knows, and his people knows, and the witness of God in the consciences of our very adversaries, will one day testify for us, That this is not the cause why we refuse to swear; but it is only and singly in pure obedience and conscience to the Lord Jesus Christ, who saith, Swear not at all; and this is his command unto his followers: " Though it was said by them of old
 " time, thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt
 " perform thine oaths unto the Lord;" they might then swear, for it was commanded; but now Christ being come, who is the end of the law, and fulfiller of it, saith, Swear not at all: by which it is clear, that all swearing is forbidden; for the law did forbid and prohibit all vain and frivolous swearing; and if these words of Christ did reach no farther, than to prohibit that, as some would limit them, then Christ had only forbid that which before was forbidden by the law; but it is very
 plain

plain his words do extend farther, because he repeats what before was forbidden and commanded, and then goes on farther, But I say unto you, Swear not at all, &c. And how he could have spoken more fully, I cannot tell. And also the apostle James preaches the same doctrine, with the same absolute prohibition, But above all things, my brethren, Swear not; for it was so positively forbidden by Christ, that he put that as it were above all things, neither by heaven, nor earth, (mark) nor any other oath: no oath was to be sworn by the true Christians, who were brought out of the strife, that was among men, into love, and peace, and goodwill towards all men. And truly it is a token of darkness, and much ignorance, that any man professing Christianity should have any word to say against such a thing, which is so clearly forbidden. And how many Christians have suffered since, for refusing to swear, appears by several ancient histories: and upon the same account only do we refuse to swear at this day, having received the Christian spirit, which in us saith, Swear not. And therefore, upon this general account, we cannot swear allegiance to the king; but we can and have proffered to promise in faithfulness, and do desire, that the same punishment may be inflicted upon those that break their word and promise, as on them that break their oaths; and if this were taken, it would appear, that we make as much conscience, and more, to keep our promise, as any men do their oaths, and it is to the full as binding to us: for it is a common saying among men, Those that will swear, will lie; and many that will now swear allegiance to the king, to save their outward liberty, would soon swear against him upon occasion. And if it had been known, that ever we could swear in any case, since we were a people, and would not

now swear allegiance to the king; then indeed there were great cause of suspicion: but we have always denied to swear, in any case, since we knew the truth, and had the Spirit of Christ to guide us; and have suffered upon divers accounts in former days: and therefore, in reason and justice, we ought not to suffer in this case, for refusing to swear allegiance to the king; neither ought men to ensnare us, because of the tenderness of our consciences to the Lord: for we have always desired the good and happiness of the king, and all men, in this world, and that which is to come. And inasmuch as we live in the fear of God, and peaceably, it is that which brings honour to good government and kings, when subjects do live in the fear of God: And such as do live wickedly, in ungodly ways and practices, dishonour God and good government, and kings too. And we are for peace, and deny that spirit that would plot or contrive mischief against the king, or any man's person; for our principle is peaceable, and leads to love and good-will towards all men; which is the principle of truth and honesty; as will appear, when all false suspicions will die, and the refuge of lies, and evil reports, will be swept away. And thus we have spoken the truth, in simplicity, desiring that it may be for good unto all, to whom it may come.

We are lovers of truth and righteousness, and every one that truly desires to walk therein; in which alone true happiness and everlasting peace is enjoyed, by all such as do believe and walk in the light of righteousness, which leads out of the evil way, which the sons of men have long run on in, in the time of great darkness, which hath overshadowed the earth, which shall pass away;
and

and light shall shine more and more in the hearts of men; in which all that do walk shall know the salvation of God, and partake of his mercies, and great loving-kindness, and praise and magnify his glorious name for evermore.

Reading Gaol, the 22d
day of the 5th
month, 1665.

THUS saith the Lord, say to them that are of
the carnal heart, Be strong, say not, behold
your God will come with vengeance, even God
with a recompense; he will come and save you.
This is spoken unto you, whose consciences are
tender, having deep sense of God's judgments
upon your sinners, which are now upon the tip of
London, and other parts of this ill-famed city upon
your own persons or families, or as yet more re-
mote than you, who wait upon the Lord in the way
of his judgments; if possibly he may be entreated
by you to stop his hand from laying the righteous
together with the wicked, and thus we know not
their right hand from their left. Ye know it is
anger he is kindled over a whole world polluted and
those that perished in it.
I know your griefs, and am well acquainted
with your sorrows; which are most of all, that
ye yourselves are not redeemed the same as ye
have the right hand of God's grace, in that for your
time ye might have been teachers of others; ye
have need to be taught the first principles of the
teachings

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COMPASSION

TO ALL THE

*Sorrowful, Afflicted, Visited, Tempted, Suffering Seed;
whether inwardly or outwardly, in the City of
London, or elsewhere in England.*

THUS saith the Lord, Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.

This is spoken unto you, whose consciences are tender, having the deep sense of God's judgments upon your spirits, which are now upon the city of London, and other parts of this isle; whether upon your own persons or families, or as yet more remote from you, who wait upon the Lord in the way of his judgments; if possibly he may be entreated by you, to stop his hand from slaying the righteous together with the wicked, and those who know not their right hand from their left. Ye know if his anger be kindled but a little, that blessed are all those that put their trust in him.

I know your griefs, and am well acquainted with your sorrows; which are most of all, that ye yourselves have not redeemed the time, as ye now see ye might have done, although ye grieve to see others despise God's laws, in that for your time ye might have been teachers of others, ye have need to be taught the first principles of the teachings

teachings of God; as repentance from your dead works, it being your daily burden; that ye can feel no more life stirring in your hearts and services, nor no more faith towards God, to draw life and virtue from him; nor no more of the operations of his hand, and openings thereof, to fill you with his blessings; which makes ye doubt sometimes, whether ye are of the sheep of his pasture, or of the number of the flock of his hands, by reason of your leanness of soul, and poverty of spirit; concluding in yourselves, ye have not yet truly learnt the doctrine of baptisms; being ye find so much of self, and the spirit of this world alive in you, and so little of the hay, straw, and stubble, yet consumed and burnt up in you; that ye question, many times, whether ye know the foundation of God laid in your hearts. And ye find daily so many temptations, and vain thoughts, lodge within you, to the disquieting and vexing, of your righteous souls, that ye fear the baptism of the Holy Spirit is not yet attained by you; seeing your sorrows are so many, and your comforts so few and uncertain, that ye know not certainly, whether there be any such Holy Spirit come into your hearts.

And for the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment, ye fear that ye know little of them, more than ye have received by the hearing of the ear, and reading of the letter without you; therefore ye doubt that your faith stands but in word, and not in power: because it removeth so little out of your hearts that stood there before, and giveth you no more victory over the world; but as ye were, so ye are still, too much in bondage to it, which is your grief; although, too long after, victory is present with you; but how to attain and perform it continually over all things, both in words, thoughts, and actions, ye find not. Yet ye cannot

cannot satisfy yourselves with the common faith, viz. That such a state or condition is not attainable, but rather find cause enough in yourselves, to judge your own remissness and negligence, in not watching in the light, to keep your hearts with all diligence, experiencing that now your own folly doth correct you, because ye have often had precious seasons and opportunities, as a daily price, put into your hands, but ye improved them not as ye might have done. Nevertheless, ye dare not, like those, whose foolish hearts are darkened, lay the fault upon God, as if the reason was, because he denied you power, never intending to make you perfectly holy, lest your salvation should be of yourselves. But experience hath taught you otherwise, in that when ye are at any time most holy and sanctified throughout, in body, soul, and spirit; ye are then most meek and lowly, inheriting the presence and kingdom of God in your hearts.

Farther, ye know there would be no variance or discord between the Lord and you, but for your defects in love to him, and watchfulness to his counsel; from which causes, flows your miscarriages in life and conversation; and such darkness upon you, that ye cannot see the salvation of God, crying out as undone; saying, We are cast out of thy sight, O Lord; wilt thou be merciful no more? And no marvel, because ye know right well, that if the Lord be always before you, ye cannot be moved.

Thus far I have traced you, by the footsteps of the flocks of the companions; although to you they seem as untrodden paths, and like the way of an eagle, and as a ship at sea: yet be it known unto you, the same steps have been trodden by your brethren that are in the world, as the way of the Lord,

Lord, to shew them what was in their hearts, like as he did to Israel of old.

O that I had the tongue of the learned, so as to shew you the causes of your diseased weakneses, that a perfect cure might be received.

First of all, I find your minds abroad, and your eyes gadding too much in the ends of the earth, where ye find many wandering like yourselves; which multitudes so infect your minds, as to strengthen your hands in this evil, and thereby to lessen it in yourselves.

Also the wicked one so busieth you, in finding fault with others, as if ye were to keep their vineyards, whereby he cunningly enticeth you to neglect your own, under pretence of service to them; or otherwise, to fill your hearts so with prejudice against religion itself, as if all men were liars: Which thing lurking so secretly in your bosoms, that when the winter cometh, and storms arise, it gendereth to fear and bondage, through the mixture of unbelief, carelesness, and lukewarm indifferency: all which now appears to be a monstrous birth, although before nursed and dandled as a most beautiful child, and so lawfully begotten, as none so likely to inherit the kingdom as it: but now ye see it is for judgment, and must not be heir with the son of the free woman.

Again, As many by talking what once they did possess and enjoy, have lost the sense and comfort of what they should have to support them at present; so others, by speaking so much of suffering, are made unfit to suffer: and at this day, how many are there, who have so spent their precious time, in often relating the cruel deaths and hardships of others, that they are neither prepared to die, nor fitted for trial themselves: and hence also ariseth the multitudes of their fears and troubles.

Another

Another cause of your fear and trouble, I find to be the falling of many good and righteous people, in this common calamity; as if the Lord had no more respect to them that serve and fear him, than to the wicked and profane; seeing what befalls the swearer, befalls him that fears an oath. But this comes to pass, that none may presume, and that all may fear before him; yet the accuser of the brethren wounds you so sorely on this account, that ye daily feel his stings, by all tidings that come to your ears, concerning the Lord's visiting the righteous with the wicked, and little children in their innocency, with grown people in their sins: which thing, as it doth much imbolden the ungodly in their presumption, so it doth discourage the weak in the faith, as if they served God for nought; not remembering that it is written, No man knoweth either love or hatred, by all that is before him. And it is meet it should be so, because the love and hatred are to the two seeds of Jacob and Esau, which are invisible: therefore, they that keep not to the light, in the daily watchfulness through believing in it, but look out at things visible and temporal, such are unstable in all their ways, and misinterpret all the Lord's proceedings: whence ariseth such discontentedness of mind, and trouble of spirit, that they are ready to say with Jonas, They do well to be angry, thinking they have cause enough for it, even unto death.

Thus doth the evil nature deal with the Lord, when it gets loose from the bit and bridle. But this is the plague, for people to die in their sins, as Christ said to the Jews, all must die, but ye shall die in your sins.

Yet hear, O Jacob; and hearken, O Israel, that art afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; the Lord will lay thy foundation, as with precious

precious stones; thou shalt be taught of the Lord, and in righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear.

A farther cause of fear and trouble, may be the natural temper and inclination of your minds and spirits, not yet knowing the seed of life, so raised into dominion in your hearts, as to witness it stronger in you, than he that is in the world: therefore ye lie open to the storms and blasts of fear and distrust; notwithstanding the root of the matter may be in you, yet is it but as a seed sown in weakness, and as yet not raised in power. And by reason of this your natural temper, ye may labour more with your own hearts, than some others do, and yet not able to attain that victory and courage which they arrive at; which makes you conclude, the root of the matter is not in you; and that one day ye shall fall by the hand of Saul; and your fears do so attend you, upon every approach of danger, as those that can do nothing of your own selves, and yet are able to do all things, through Christ strengthening of you. I know you well, that when ye are naked, none so timorous, ye knowing self to be of no reputation; but when ye have girt on strength, and sunk down into the armour of light, none so bold and valiant; although thou be but a little one, thou art as David, not afraid of great Goliath, when into the name of the Lord thou art gotten. Feel me, for I would not have you dismayed, because of this kind of fear: therefore be ye still; when ye feel it arise in you, look not at it, but keep your minds out of all compliance with it; and the just that live by faith, will spring in your hearts, suddenly daunting your fears, and driving them back; whereby you will witness the power of God to arise in you; by which, through faith, ye will be kept unto salvation.

But

But in your journey it will fare with you, as sometimes with Ahaz, unto whom the Lord said, Ask thee a sign, when the enemies conspired against him; But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord," &c. In like manner will he find your souls compassed about with evils; some that ye are guilty of through negligence, &c. and others laid to your charge by the accuser, as if because he tempted, ye had consented; and others also by him threatened to come upon you, as a just reward for the former: yet in this very condition the Lord bids you believe in his grace, that shall be sufficient for you in this great strait: but take heed, at such a time, lest, like Ahaz, you hastily reply, "I will not, nor I cannot believe; neither will I tempt the Lord, in presuming to be quiet and still, through believing in his light and power, that secretly shews me my duty, and stirs me up unto it in my own breast, in this close besetting."

I say unto you, if ye will not now believe, as in hope against hope, ye shall not be established: but on the contrary, if ye will believe in the light, this great distress, and sore besiege, shall be unto you, as the death of Lazarus was unto Martha and Mary; concerning which, Christ said, He was glad, although they were troubled, in that it should be an advantage to their faith, whereby they saw the glory of God in Christ, raising him from the dead.

But I know you are so overwhelmed with fears, many times, that ye cannot hearken or be still, like the children of Israel that could not hearken unto Moses, because of the anguish of their spirits: even so do your fears and unbelief indispose and unfit you for any service acceptable in God's sight, whereby ye are ready to conclude yourselves to be without, amongst the fearful and unbelieving, &c. Rev. xxi. 8. But I say unto you, that he who
came

came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, shall not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; he it is that invites you, because ye are weary and heavy laden; and whoever comes to him, he will in no ways cast off; for he comes to deliver those, who all their lifetime were subject to bondage, by reason of the fear of death. Therefore, take heed ye refuse not him that speaks from heaven, who appears the second time unto them that look for him, without sin unto salvation, to set them free, through believing in the truth, which God loves in your inward parts; which freedom, in due time, ye will reap, O ye that have sown in tears, if ye faint not; and that ye may not faint, he hath provided a cordial for you, and that near you, even the Spirit itself to help your infirmity, and to comfort you by bearing witness with your spirits, that ye are the Lord's; which above all things ye desire to know, and to have the full assurance of. The counsel of the Lord is unto you in this case, to delight yourselves in him, and hereby will you enjoy the desires of your hearts; and through keeping his sayings, which ye will hear him daily saying in you, and unto you, as humble and meek, in his light ye will abide and walk, and ye easily know his voice, and his words to be spirit and life; and that ye may be fully assured it is he, the works which he doth in you, and for you, bear witness of him. And by faith in him, will he become an inhabitant in you; for we are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus; and by faith he dwelleth in your hearts; and hereby will ye know that ye know him, and have the full assurance of him, because the Son of God is come to give you this understanding, by virtue of his being in you, and ye in him, who is true God, and eternal life.

S

I have

I have now something to say to those fearful, that are without amongst the unbelievers, and abominable murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and all liars, who shall have their portion in the lake; who cannot endure the Lamb, nor the presence of God, when he steps upon the throne, but fly to the mountains and hills, in which they have trusted, to hide them in the day of calamity. These are of Cain's generation, that are better at killing than sacrificing; and as the fruit of their doings, they are always afraid, and that where no fear is, even of every man, not knowing whom to trust, as Cain was; and although such hide their sin, as Adam, they shall not prosper. But of this sort I have something to say, more at large, by themselves, and so I pass them by at present.

Others there are, who are yet without amongst the dogs, unto whom I intend not the childrens bread before spoken of; and they are such who are always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, to make them free from their fears, being laden with sin, and led away with divers lusts; thinking an opinion of truth will save them, while they are crucifying afresh the Son of God, and putting him to open shame; flying to scripture sanctuary, as the Jews did, who searched the Scriptures, but would not come to Christ; and in a wrong zeal, as the disciples did, when they would have had those consumed that followed not with them, urging to Christ, the example of Elias. But let these know, that their fears flow from the guilt of sin that defiles their consciences; which all the sacrifices that they offer day by day, can never take away, nor make the comers thereunto perfect; because they reach
not

not the conscience, but still there remains a conscience accusing for sin; because they believe not in the light to walk in it; that the blood of Jesus might be known, to sprinkle their hearts from an evil conscience; that they may witness by it perfection, as pertaining to the conscience. Therefore these are not free from affrighting, terrifying fears, because their sins remain; how confident soever they may seem to be of their eternal conditions, in that they know not the truth, as it is in Jesus; for if they did, it would make them free. Unto such I say, they are yet too high and wise for God, and therefore must come down to know a meek, poor and quiet spirit within them; which is of price, beyond all their talk, knowledge, and empty profession of Scriptures, God and Christ without them, while they have not learned to stand still, to feel the Spirit of Christ to be their strength and leader within them: these shall likewise perish and die in their sins, if they bring not forth fruits meet for repentance, through that faith which is held in a pure conscience.

But unto you whose hearts are tender, and consciences awakened unto righteousness, shall the Son of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings; for ye love his present appearance in your hearts, and wait for the brightness of his coming, to consume whatever is contrary to himself, that he may be, and none besides him. Therefore, for your comfort, I have this to assure you of, from my God and your God, That he will come quickly, and will not tarry, and ye know his reward is with him; because ye never enjoyed him, but ye were sufficiently rewarded for waiting upon him.

And these clouds of sufferings, whether sickness, bonds or banishment, are but as the evening,

which must be added to the morning, to make up the last day, in which God will perfectly raise up his seed, as well as the first day. O sing, thou barren, and thou that didst not bear; for now shalt thou be fruitful in children, and they shall sing together, as the sons of the morning of this blessed holy day, the new song, which none can learn, but the redeemed out of the earth: although now in the evening thou mayest be weeping by the rivers of Babylon, with thy instrument untuned, because in a strange land. Behold the bridegroom cometh, at whose presence thy sorrow shall be turned into rejoicing, and thy joy shall none take from thee: but the world shall mourn; and now is the day of their sorrow begun, even that great and sore distress of nations spoken of, with that unexpressible wo, wo, wo, upon the inhabitants of the earth; which hath been often sounded through the Lord's witnesses and servants, that it may be known there have been prophets in England, and sounding in thy streets, O London! But who shall live when God doth this, besides the seed that shall serve the Lord!

Feel it already begin to arise in your hearts; O all ye that fear the Lord! by all the oppositions it meets withal; and saying in you, If this be to be vile, to rejoice at the return of the glory of Israel, I will yet be more vile, and all the lookers on, like Michal, shall be ashamed, when the seed of David shall be exalted over all, to the praise of the glory of the name of its God for ever: therefore, thou royal seed, it is good for thee to draw near unto him; that when he takes peace from the earth, both within and without, that then thou mayest encourage thyself in the Lord thy God, who is over all blessed for evermore. Amen.

This

This is from a sufferer with the righteous
seed, and one that prays and waits for its
deliverance out of all its troubles, in all
where it yet groans for redemption, a salu-
tion of unfeigned love.

The fourth of the seventh
month, 1665.

J. CROOK.

TRUTH'S PROGRESS:

O R,

*A Short Relation of its first Appearance and
Publication after the Apostacy.*

CONTAINING

1. *An Epistolary Salutation.* 2. *An Expostulation.*
3. *The Description of the Truth, as it was declared in the beginning, with its Progress, Operation, and Opposition.* 4. *The Rise and Ground of the true Ministry.* 5. *To all who have at any Time, or in any Place, wrested or misapplied my Words or Writings, as some have done, to make them suit with their Evil Intentions; that they may be convinced of their Evil, and do no more so.* 6. *That all Jealousies, and all false Judgments grounded thereupon, may be removed out of the Minds of all concerned therein; and they cautioned for the future of all such Dealings and Practices.* 7. *The Author's Appeal concerning himself.* 8. *An Exhortation to all, to try themselves by the Truth, as it was received and published in the beginning.* 9. *That all who are fallen, may be restored; and the Way of their Recovery declared.* 10. *A Word of Reproof to all People and Professors, who encourage themselves and one another to hope for the Downfall of the Quakers, so called, and the Truth which they profess, because of any thing that befalls them in this World.* 11. *The Afflicted Soul's Complaint and Cure.*

Dear Friends,

FROM the deep sense of the great care, love, mercy, and long-suffering of God, which he hath exercised towards us all, do I at this time
write

write unto you; desiring the Lord so to direct my heart, that what is here signified, may fully and effectually reach every conscience and condition; that they may be as words in season to every state, hitting the mark; and as nails fastened by the master of the assembly, in every particular of you.

If Christ loved the young man, as it is recorded in Scripture, because from his youth upward he had been towardly, affecting the best things, and observant of God's commands; then, in pursuance of Christ's example, ought every one of us, that are his disciples, to pity and compassionate all those who have been convinced by the everlasting gospel, of the way to life and salvation, which some of them have been breathing after, ever since their young years, and yet now may be hindered, by Satan's wiles and devices, from walking in that way and path of peace and happiness; some by one snare, and others by other stratagems, which the subtle adversary useth to beguile the simple withal.

Indeed my heart affects mine eye in this matter, and I could say from my very soul, O that some arrow out of the bow of the Almighty might wound and slay that enemy, which hath stopped any in that race which once they were running in, to obtain the crown! What shall I say unto you, or do for you? For my bowels yearn after you, and my spirit is grieved for you, night and day, that are hindered; that ye should come so near the good land, as not only to behold it afar off, but many of you so near the borders thereof, as to taste the fruit of it; and yet to go back again into the wilderness, amongst the briars and thorns: what pity is this!

2. Shall ever length of time, multitude of business, increase of worldly riches, offences, prejudices, snares, or temptations, or whatever can

be named, be able to blot out the sweet remembrance of the tender mercies of God unto your souls, shewed unto you in the day of your sore and deep distress, which I am persuaded many of you once felt, and were in measure acquainted withal? Shall any heighth, length, breadth, or depth, be able to separate you, that have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, from the sensible soul engaging feeling of that love and mercy, so freely bestowed upon you? Or to stop your mouths from proclaiming, in the assemblies of his people, what he hath done for you, when you were very low, even like unto dry bones? O take heed, take heed! lest your continuance in evil be accounted, by the pure and just God, a despising of the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.

For who can, with Sampson, return to view the dead carcases of the strong lions, which by the grace of God they once overcame, and that but while young and green in the truth, and not be melted in spirit, and broken as before the Lord, through the sense of the sweetness and freeness of that love and goodness, that so fully gave them the victory, through faith in his name and virtue?

O! can you remember those years of drought and famine, not of bread, but of hearing the word of the Lord, which passed over your heads, when the very heavens were as brass, and the earth as iron, and not be astonished, that the little black cloud should appear in your day, which must spread until the face of the whole heavens be covered, and all the earth be watered thereby?

What were ye, or your father's house, or any of us, that when we were as the poor shepherds, that kept their flocks by night, that then the day-
star

star should appear, and arise in our hearts, and not first manifest itself to the doctors and great rabbies of the time, that first from them might flow the light of life; but that God's free choice in the promised seed might appear, to the stilling of every enemy and avenger? And shall any, that have been eye-witnesses of these things in any measure, draw back, or be found unthankful to him, that found them out, and ordained strength for them; when otherwise the devourer had at that time destroyed them?

But lest I should seem to any to be like those the apostle speaks of, that said, "Be clothed, fed, and warmed;" but neither gave them clothes, food, nor fuel, to relieve and succour them: I shall descend into particulars, for the clearing the truth, for the relief and better information of all those principally concerned in this testimony, and for the keeping my own soul free from the blood of all men: and bear with me, if I use plainness, and let no man account me his enemy, because I tell him the truth.

It was the practice of the prophets and apostles in their time and day, to remember the people of the wonders, mercies, and deliverances, that the Lord had given to them, and to their fathers; as may be seen by Nehemiah, David, and others; and by the martyr Stephen, and the apostle Paul: both of God's dealings with them, and with their fathers; and how the truth grew and prospered, and who were the enemies of it; and how the Lord upheld his witnesses, and scattered his adversaries: and also by what way and method those were reclaimed and reduced, that had backsliden and fallen from their stedfastness, and from the gospel-order: as in general may be seen by the prophets carriages and messages to blacksliding Israel; and in particular, Samuel towards Saul, and Nathan to David;
and

and others also, recorded in Scripture. In like manner I find it recorded in the New Testament, that it was the apostles practice, to restore from mistakes and irregularities, by bringing them concerned to the beginning; as in the case of divorce by Moses, for the hardness of people's hearts; but it was not so in the beginning, as it is said. And also to rectify mistakes, and confirm due subjection in marriage state; the apostle instanceth in God's giving the woman to the man; or, that Adam was first formed, and then Eve; and also, how Sarah called Abraham lord. And likewise in the abuse of their love feasts, or breaking bread, Paul brings them to the beginning; or Christ's practice of it at first, saying, In the same night he was betrayed, he took bread, &c. As if to bring abuses and mistakes to the first, were to see their last.

3. In like manner let me mind you a little of the appearance and publication of Truth again, as in the beginning, and of its progress unto this day: not at large, in all particulars, lest I should swell the volume beyond my intention; but, as in a map, to bring the substance pertinent to the occasion, to the reader's view, in as small a compass as I can, with freedom and clearness.

After the long, grieved, retired, solitary state of the church in the wilderness, it pleased God, in his appointed time, to cause a voice to be heard, crying, Make strait the way of the Lord: all flesh having corrupted their way, and their guides being blind, there was no hope that ever people could find their resting-place, which they had so long forgotten: their physicians being of no worth or value, working no perfect cure upon any of their foul-sick patients; pouring brine, instead of oil, into their wounds; and giving bitter gall and vinegar to dying men, instead of reviving cordials; mistaking

mistaking both the disease, its seat, and way of cure: applying words and promises to the memory and understanding natural, as if the malady had been in the head, for want of knowledge in the brain. Whenas the people, Mephibosheth-like, were all diseased in their feet; not looking, as they should, unto their walking, to make strait paths for their feet, and the law of God to be a light unto their feet, and a lantern to their paths.

Now the word of the Lord was precious in those days; for there was no open vision. And the voice which at first was heard in the wilderness, crying, Prepare the way of the Lord, came afterward to be heard upon the Mount, out of the most excellent glory; confirming his appearance, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." So mighty was the word of God, that it grew and prospered, cutting down whatever stood in its way, the strong oaks, as well as the tall cedars; levelling also many high mountains with the low valleys: and it was so quick and powerful, that it discerned between the thoughts and intents of the heart, and divided between the flesh and spirit, shell and kernel, form and power, painted Jezabel and the true spouse, and between the marrow, and the bone that cased it: discovering to all men their thoughts, that it met withal; making all flesh to tremble in its progress: whence, in scorn, came the name **QUAKER** to be given to those that came under its power.

How it abased self, and made it of no reputation; and how it made the cross to be endured, and taken up daily, unto all excess and superfluities, whether in meats or drinks, apparel, or honours and dignities below; in whatsoever they fashioned themselves to this world, and its glory, that was not of the Father; and to follow only those things that made for peace, and whatsoever was

was of good report; reforming throughout, in body, soul, and spirit, as well as outward, in gestures, and postures, and language, and behaviour, divers from all people; which made them become a gazing-stock to men and angels, and to be hated of their own mother's son, and near relations: yet, through their taking up the cross daily to those things, they despised the shame that came upon them from the wicked world therefore. The truth of all these things is known to them that were eye-witnesses from the beginning.

How it made many to cast away things of great value, as it was in the apostles days, and their pictures, laces, and other needless attires and superfluities, with which many, (that the word of eternal life met withal in its circuit and progress) were then adorned after the fashion of this world: and how, by its authority, it spoiled the image and pomp of this present world, insomuch that the very visage of many was so marred, that they became a wonder to their former intimates and acquaintance; laying low all sorts of people, bringing down the honourable of the earth, in that day to deny their titles and attendants; some from the judgment-seat, and others from their great gains, in their needless trafficks; making many valiant men of war to put up their swords, and become men of peace, and to learn war no more.

But what shall I say of the wise and learned, and men of all professions, religions, and opinions, that were gathered from all quarters of the land, as it took them in its progress; and honourable women, of all persuasions, not a few? Making some to leave their nets, and others the receipt of custom, to become followers of truth; though not to disdain their lawful callings, but to return to them again; as Paul did to his tent-making, and others to their nets, upon occasion; as an ancient
father

father once said : ‘ but we never read,’ said he, ‘ that
 ‘ those who were called from the receipt of custom,
 ‘ returned thither any more :’ observing thence, That
 some callings, once laid down, ought never to be
 taken up again.

4. What unwearied pains the truth made many
 to take, to run to and fro, to inform and fore-
 warn their relations and acquaintance, lest they
 should neglect the day of their visitation; and they,
 knowing the truth, should become guilty of their
 blood, because they had not forewarned them; is
 known to many witnesses. And also, how many,
 like David’s worthies, brake through an host and
 camp of dangers, to bring the water of life to
 the thirsty souls; and what blows and bruises, im-
 prisonments and sufferings they met withal in
 their passages, there was scarce in that day such
 a stranger in Israel, but knew it right well. And
 will it not be charged by the Lord, that sent them,
 as great ingratitude in those that received of their
 water, but now have forgotten it, so as evilly to
 requite them for their good?

How tender were the hearts of those made in
 that day, which received the word of life? And
 what was too dear for them to part withal, for
 the advancement of truth, and its testimony? Nay,
 what zeal, what care to preserve those then begot-
 ten, lest they should be turned aside by the enemy?
 If but an evil report was occasioned through any
 indiscretion, what pains was taken to stop it? Or if
 any nakedness appeared in any, what love and pity
 was used to cover it; lest the world should know
 it, and blaspheme the pure name of God thereby,
 and the person perish in the snare of the Devil, for
 want of a little balm and restoring medicine? I need
 not mention, except to provoke those that are in a
 declension in these things, the love that abounded,
 and the delight that the sheep of God’s pasture took,
 in

in being often together, their hearts cleaving to each other, like the soul of Jonathan and David; many hours seeming but a short time; and often meeting together, although through great hardships and difficulties, appeared as nothing, in comparison of the great joy and comfort they found in coming together to meet with the Lord, and to feel the glory of his presence amongst them.

All which is known, and much more, unto those that were eye and heart witnesses from the beginning. Let me mind you also of the great care and circumspection that every sound heart had at that day, of whispering, or backbiting any, or of letting in any hard or prejudicial thoughts or jealousies, concerning any that were in the least measure in the truth; but much more touching the least of those that had the message of glad-tidings to deliver from the great God; whose care was, to approve themselves in all things, lest the gospel should be blamed, either through life or doctrine. And how few and savoury the words of all convinced were, that had their hearts seasoned with the grace of God, to the edification of all that conversed with them; being watchful, lest their hearts should be sown with mingled seed, or that they should mix spirits with the world; being principally careful, that their hearts might not be overcharged with the cares of this life: not at all affecting great things for themselves, nor to get a name in the earth; but to stand approved in God's sight, which they valued beyond the judgment of the wise, and of the honourable in the earth, or of any of the sons of men; is also fully known to them that were converted in the beginning.

What the testimony itself was in the beginning, as to doctrine and good manners, I need not mention in particular; because it is also known and testified

testified unto by many witnesses, as it was in the beginning: as also, its form and dress, in which it first appeared upon the stage of this world. Only let me remember you of its disguised habit, that none of the worldly wise could know it, or receive it in reality.

How it did anatomize and dissect men in their inward parts, whereby they came to see and understand the mystery of iniquity in all its workings, lineaments, and dependencies, with the man of sin, his seat and government in them, above all that is called God, and how he was worshipped as God; which was the cause why those, who thus learned of Christ, appeared so rough and sharp against hypocrisy in all professions, of what form or opinion soever they were, from a true certain sight and knowledge that they had of the states and conditions of all people, in their several ways and worships; discerning the insides of others, by the spirit of truth, which had given them a certain knowledge of themselves: from whence, as truly learned, and like skilful physicians, they came to understand both the diseases, and cause of them, and also the right way of cure for them; and durst not daub with untempered mortar, as the unskilful builders had done before them; nor heal the several hurts and diseases of people slightly; but first removed the cause, and then the effect ceased. And thus the Lord blessed the truth, and prospered it from the beginning, in the hearts and hands of those, who continued faithful witnesses of it, and to it, as it was in the beginning: blessed be his holy name for ever. Amen.

But the way of cure being so sharp and terrible to all flesh, many that assented to the skill of the physicians, and were convinced of the truth, after they had tasted a little of judgment, as the sharp
medicine,

medicine, to eat through all the deadness and darkness within them; all the passages of life being dammed up, and the power working strongly to remove all those obstructions, many escaped, and fled the judgment, not being able to endure the mightiness of its operation, and therefore never came through the work of regeneration; but got loose, after a deadly wound, and so became only formal for a time: and such, although they might come out with us in the beginning, yet went away, some to the earth, and others to their old courses, according to the proverb, having opportunity of returning, they returned again with the dog to his vomit; which manifests, they did not stand by faith, nor were born of the immortal seed.

These, like the star John speaks of in the Revelations, fell from heaven to the earth, and then became chief factors for the evil one, being entrusted with the keys of the bottomless pit, and had power to hurt all but the green thing, for the time suffered, which will not be long, beyond those that never attained to a state higher than the earth; and such revolvers are profound to make slaughter; and are like unto Gehazi, coveting after those things, which that master refused, whom they pretended to serve. But they have been, and shall be also requited with like plague and punishment; for the leprosy of Naaman came upon Gehazi. Let him read that can understand.

Now, friends, it is in my heart, as God shall enable me, somewhat to let you understand the cunning workings of the enemy, in his opposition to the truth, and to betray the simple; to this end, That they who have been beguiled by him, may be delivered out of his snare; and others prevented by their example, That the truth may prevail in and over all.

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The contests about religion hitherto, have not been so much about the trial of spirits, as between opinion and opinion, and between interpretation and interpretation of Holy Scripture. And yet it hath been the complaint of all sides, that they have not had fair dealings from the adverse party; especially from those that have had the sword, and outward power on their side; because, like the Jews against Stephen, when arguments have been wanting, they have presently run to the heap of stones: and like dealings the innocent have met withal in this age; whenas in religious matters men ought to be conquered or silenced; as the stars in brightness do exceed each other, and the darkness also, and the moon them all; and as the sun doth both the moon and stars, by a transcendent and outshining glory, which rather naturally swalloweth them up, or comprehends them, than forceth them; as the vast ocean doth the little brooks and land rivers; or, according to Scripture phrase, as mortality is swallowed up of life; and in this sense ought every lesser measure be subject to the greater; and so it is not hurt by, but blessed of the greater; as it is written, The lesser is blessed of the greater. And not as beasts do each other, by force and mastership; as it is written, Man being in honour abideth not, but becometh like the beast that perisheth; and what the master beast's carriage is to all the rest, experience sheweth: for Christ gently leads, but not forcibly drives, his lambs into the fold of rest.

But now as the contest comes closer between spirit and spirit, it must needs be hotter, because the relation is nearer; and differences between near relations, if one side doth not bear, are more disquieting, than between neighbours, and worse between neighbours than strangers; for now the enemy, as it were, hath all at stake at once, know-

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ing his time is but short, and therefore rageth the more; and the battle must needs be sharp, because he is cast out of many already, blessed be the Lord, and must be cast out of more daily; because that everlasting gospel is preached again, and must be, to all nations, for a sign of his destruction, but their recovery and salvation; that, as sin hath reigned unto death and darkness, so righteousness might reign to light and life, until the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth, as blindness and ignorance hath done, and as the waters cover the sea.

So that now the great business is, for every one, convinced of God's everlasting truth, To examine themselves with the light of Jesus Christ, that they may know what spirit they are of; and not to conclude, they are all born of that right spirit, because they once were in measure guided by it, or because they have it at present convincing of them, or striving with them, to gain obedience from them in all things unto itself; and therefore to father all actions and motions upon it, as the author of them; is not only an heinous offence against God, but also dangerously hazardous to that soul which so presumes.

Therefore I shall in short speak something concerning the pure, holy, sanctifying Spirit of God, that every one may understand what spirit they are of; as the apostle did, in order to the recovery of those which were drawn aside amongst the Galatians, bringing them to the beginning, saying, Ye began well, ye began in the spirit; and also minding them of the fruits of it, which while they abode in it, they knew: and also the fruits of the flesh, which also they might know to abound in them, so soon as ever they had departed from the Spirit; and doubtless he instances in such particular fruits of the Spirit, as most abound in those who abide in

in it, toward those which have departed from it, as the most effectual means to reclaim them: and on the contrary, the like may be said of the particular fruits of the flesh, which he instanceth in; else he spake but in general, and so answered not the particular occasion, as most proper to obtain his travel, which was their recovery. The particular fruits of the Spirit he instanceth in, are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.

Now the contrary to these, must needs proceed from the flesh; otherwise they could not try themselves according to his advice. In like manner do I exhort all to come to the light and Spirit of Christ within them, to shew unto them their miscarriages, and whether they hold the truth as it was in the beginning; for envy, strife, bitterness, fierceness, wrath, watching for evil, despising of those that are good, and such as are employed by the Lord to feed his lambs, and to preach the everlasting gospel freely, as they have freely received it; or to lay stumbling-blocks in the way of the weak; or to cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, because of the miscarriages of some. Those, and the like, doubtless, are evils that the Lord will not suffer to go unpunished; and are for judgment, and must be repented of, by all that are guilty of them.

Again, Let none that are guilty think to wipe their mouths, and say, These things concern not me: well, to the witness in thee thou art brought, from whence there is no appeal; for if that condemn thee, God is greater. I am now in all faithfulness endeavouring thy recovery, and if I may speak it without offence, I could even desire that my breast were as a window, that every one might see through me, and within me, whether my heart

and soul desireth or seeketh any thing else besides the advancement of truth, and the liberty of every captive, that in any measure breatheth after the living God; for I am sure there is a seed that would serve the Lord, did not a hard heart hinder it within, as Pharaoh did without.

Let me in honesty of heart reason with you a little: What can you charge against this elect seed? Who hath it wronged? And whose name hath it defamed? Or whom hath it betrayed? Or whose gold, or silver, or apparel, hath it coveted? Or what good order hath it broken? Or did it ever put any upon the forsaking the assemblies of the saints? Either for fear of suffering, or out of sullenness of mind, because of prejudice against the persons of any; or out of slighting contemptuous thoughts, either of those that meet, or of the worship and service which they perform? Nay, Is it not the hasty peevish spirit that concludes all men are liars? Because some are so, that profess the truth; and therefore slights all in the mind, how fair soever they may seem to be to any outwardly. Take heed of it, for indeed the enemy works secretly to thy hurt, while thou lettest in such thoughts and reasonings; and I am sure these things are not with the consent and liking of the pure seed of life, but to the grief of it, couldst thou understand its voice, which at present is stopped from thy hearing, by the multitude of thy thoughts, prejudices, consultations, and conclusions; all which make thee confident in thyself, that thou dost well in what thou dost; like Jonah, who replied to God, He did well to be angry, even unto death.

Oh remember, that when once the light is put out, and darkness takes its place, How great is [that] darkness? As Christ said to the Jews. I have a travail in my spirit at this time for thee; the Lord

is my witness, I lie not. Oh what shall I do for the poor oppressed innocent soul, that lies under the dust of fleshly rubbish, as in a grave covered with earth in thee? Shall I say to thee in the fear and name of my God, Arise, and come forth; for why wilt thou die? Arise, and shine, for thy light is come, which doth make manifest thy state? and all the mountains shall melt before thee, and all clouds shall be scattered, and brightness appear in the face of the whole heavens; and instead of cruel bondage, that soul in whom life ariseth, shall enjoy a glorious liberty; and for grief and heaviness, the oil of joy and gladness; and for mourning and sorrow, the beautiful garments of praise and thanksgiving; for where the Spirit of the Lord is in rule and authority, there is liberty; and the Lord is that Spirit, which sets free the soul from death, by breaking the bands thereof, and snapping the chains in sunder. All thy straitness is in thy own bowels, by letting in thoughts, evils, jealousies, and surmising, &c. But thou wilt be enlarged through thy accepting of judgment upon all these things, and whatever else is contrary to the holy God; for I am to preach the everlasting gospel to thee this day, that thou mayest arise that sittest in the dust, and shew thyself forth; and awake to righteousness, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light and life; for Christ Jesus the Son of Man, is this day held forth, and lifted up unto thee, that thou mayest see him, and be saved by him, as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, to cure all the hurts they received in the wilderness; and to heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely, if yet thou wilt hearken diligently, that thy soul may live; and look up in the light to him over all thy thoughts, miscarriages, and fears, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee; and

for the time to come, owe nothing unto any man but love; and when thou art converted, thou wilt strengthen thy brethren; as before thou didst weaken them by thy evil example and conversation, inventing of that which will now be thy shame, as in the converted estate thou abidest and continuest.

I long and travail in my spirit, to see the day wherein many that have been beguiled, like Sampson, through the cunning craftiness of the wicked one, shall be restored again; for why may not the long-grieved resisted Spirit of grace, yet so strive again, as to give them victory over all that hath captivated; like the hair of Sampson that was shaven, but grew again, whereby his strength returned, that he slew more through his death, than he did by his life. Surely those that delight to dwell inwardly in close fellowship and communion with God, are sensible of the many wiles and devices which the enemy useth, to draw out their minds to give heed to those vanities which he on purpose suggesteth to make them forsake their own mercies, tendered freely to them in the light of Jesus.

What bait more likely to take, than the resemblance of that which the right innocent spirit loveth? As may be seen in the serpent's beguiling Eve from the simplicity of Christ, the express likeness and image of God, under a pretence of bringing her more into it; as it is written, And ye shall be as God, or like unto God, knowing good and evil; which the apostle calls, a beguiling through his subtilty. It is good abiding with God, in the state whereunto man is called by God, and not to remove, until he is sure the advance and remove is by the same God.

My love to the seed in all, and readiness to lend those my hand that were fallen, hath procured like judgment from some, as the Jews gave against Christ;

Christ; because he kept company, and eat and drank sometimes with publicans and sinners, to seek the lost amongst them: but the Jews seeing his readiness to mercy, tried him, whether he would do justice at all in any case, by bringing to him the woman taken in the act of uncleanness; which thing, although it proceeded from an evil intent in the Jews; yet it proved an occasion to him, to manifest both mercy and justice; mercy upon the woman, and justice upon her accusers; as being faulty persons themselves, and therefore not competent and true witnesses, to be taken in the due and right administration of justice; which method Christ still observed, to meet with forward and malicious prosecutors.

I have longed for an opportunity, a little to express my spirit and soul in this matter: I have been a man, like Heman, afflicted from my youth up, and few, but the Lord, hath been acquainted with my exercises inwardly; though outwardly also I have had my share: and, indeed, having had much forgiven me, and much love and mercy shewed to me, I cannot but be like-minded; as I am kept to the seed of life in myself, for the sake of which, I have been upheld in and over all; and what I have felt and seen the Father do to me, when I have at any time, in any thing miscarried, that do I, or at least, ought always, and in all things, and like cases, to do to others; and when I have not done so, I have felt the Lord rebuking me for it.

I acknowledge from my heart, That in cases wherein I agree, both concerning the disease, and the danger of it, with others, yet in the way of cure, I may somewhat vary; especially if I have laboured under the same temptation myself, and remember what way I was restored or helped; some by corrosives, and sharp medicines, where

the case is desperate, may be recovered; and some others also may be lost and slain, which, by a skilful hand, through the use of lenitives or cordials, might have been preserved. And if experience may give her vote, I judge she will direct to love and pity, as the most excellent way, in the first place, and in ordinary cases. But wherein I have miscarried in being too mild, and offended any, I hope they will forgive me that wrong, as they expect to be forgiven, who have at any time miscarried on the other hand.

5. But if any, on the one hand, have taken encouragement, either from my speaking or writing, to strengthen themselves in evil practices, contrary to the truth, as it was in the beginning received and held forth, from the light and Spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ; I declare, in the holy name of my God, whom I serve with my spirit, in the gospel of his Son, that I never intended any such encouragement, but always intended and endeavoured peace and union: and, whatever might proceed, at any time, either from my pen or tongue, was only to heal and make up breaches, where any were already made; and never in the least either to make new ones, or the old ones wider. And whoever they are, that have wrested my words or writings, to suit their humours and evil intentions, to hinder the prosperity of truth, and to make discord among brethren, whether in this isle, or the isles beyond the seas, they have wronged my words, and the naked intentions of my heart, and will bring upon themselves misery and destruction, if they continue therein: which I desire may be prevented by the Spirit of Jesus, making them sensible of their danger therein, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, because they have sinned against him, unto a thorough change and reformation in them
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for the time to come: and I can and do freely forgive the wrong done unto my particular.

6. On the other hand, if any have conceived jealousies in their minds, and watched for occasion against the innocent, and grounded a false judgment upon those misapprehensions, and then sent it abroad as a certain thing, on purpose to bespatter the guiltless; such shall bear their judgment, whoever they be.

I have often, in secret, considered what reason there should be for some mens jealousies; and I could find none more probable, than that of Saul's against David, viz. Because of the (voices of others) with this note upon it, viz. "And Saul eyed David from that day forward." But whether any thing of like nature or resemblance hath ever been in my heart, much less endeavoured by me, concerning the least labourer in my Father's vineyard, is known to the Lord.

7. And I appeal to all you that have known me in bonds and at liberty, amongst whom I have laboured, and been conversant these twelve years and upwards, who have known my doctrine, and manner of life, whether I have sought myself, or any thing from you, to enrich myself, but have gone a warfare at my own charge? And whether I have handled the word deceitfully, but endeavoured always to stand approved in God's presence, and to be manifest to your consciences in his sight? And whether I have used lightness among you, to stir up the vain mind to unprofitable discourses? Or whether, at any time, I suggested jealousies amongst you, concerning any of the Lord's people? Or to beget a low esteem in your minds, of those that labour in the word and doctrine of Jesus? Or, whether I have sought to get entertainment in your affections! Nay, had it been the will of God,
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I could have desired often, that my message might have been delivered, and my face and person have been unknown: as I have often said, so again I do declare, that those who keep in the feeling love of God, and honour and respect his Spirit in themselves, let such so kept, if they can, disrespect the ministers of life and peace. Bear with me, if I use plainness in this matter, for it is for no other end, but to answer the good in all, and that the gospel might have a free passage in all hearts and consciences, wherever it is published, either through this vessel, or any other whom the Lord shall use; and that an open door may be ministered through all the churches of Christ, for the word of eternal life to enter into them, from henceforth and for ever.

I labour, and am pained in spirit, until all bands be broken, and all the hearts and minds of those convinced, be opened, and prepared as a bride for her husband; that none may be found foolish virgins, contenting themselves with the words and talk of truth, like oil in the lamp only, which will go out and be consumed, if the seed of truth within be not daily felt, as oil in the vessels, to keep your lamps burning, and your lights shining, that men may see your good words, and glorify the God of your salvation.

8. I beseech you, friends and brethren, to suffer the word of exhortation to prevail with you, unto a thorough examination of your own hearts, with the light of the gospel of Jesus, whether you have kept to the truth, as declared and practised in the beginning; or you have suffered loss in your inward man, and find decays of love to God, and of zeal for his truth upon earth, I know right well, that a good condition may be easily lost, but hardly recovered: examine thyself, whether thou de-
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lightest thyself now, as much as at first thou didst; in communion with God and his people? Are the assemblies of his children as dear to thee as ever they were? If not, seek out the cause, and let no pretence blind thy mind from a diligent attending thereupon; but keep to the seed in thyself, which thinketh no ill, much less doth any, and in that thou wilt feel the benefit of communion with God's people, and wilt be bound up together with them, as in the bundle of life; and a bundle is not easily broken and shattered, as particulars apart are: search whether thou hast kept thy garments clean, from being defiled with the spirit of this world, building again in thyself, that which once thou destroyedst in others: if riches increase, set not thy heart on them; which they will easily get, if thou be not watchful and diligent in keeping thy heart and mind close unto the Lord, and his truth in the inward parts: for the love of money is the root of all evil, as it is written.

9. Take often a view of the truth, as it was in the beginning, and what effect and operation it had upon thee, when thou wast first convinced; how low, how meek, how poor in spirit, and humble in heart and mind; making thee to esteem every one better than thyself; seeing and knowing more evil in thyself, and in that nature by which thou wast a child of wrath, than in all the world beside, as in thy eye at that day. And surely experience sheweth unto the watchful, that that nature is the same, and will be bringing forth the same fruits again, if it be not mastered, and ruled over by the pure and divine; which made the apostle say, after his conversion, That in him, that is to say, in his flesh, was no good thing: which quickened state made the poor disciples cry out as guilty persons, though clear from the act, Master,

is it I? Is it I? Whilst seared Judas takes no notice of a particular intimation given him by Christ, concerning himself, who told him plainly, "He that dipped his finger with him in the dish, should betray him;" of which his hard heart took no notice. Again, Art thou as careful to keep the truth without blame, as at the beginning? and as ready to restore the fallen, and to cover the nakedness of thy brother, as at first? Is no whispering, evil speaking, and backbiting, and watching with an evil eye, and searching after weaknesses and haltings in some, accounting them great and heinous miscarriages, being glad of them, to defame those whom thou hast a mind to defame; and taking no notice of greater miscarriages in others, whom thou respectest, and wouldst have well thought of? Durst thou do thus in the beginning, when thou wast first convinced, and the lively quickening spirit ruled in thee, keeping thy spiritual senses always exercised, to discern between good and evil? Thus let every one try themselves with the measure of truth, that they may see whether they have kept to it, as it was in the beginning.

But you that have kept your habitations with God, and close unto the truth, as it was in the beginning; bless the Lord for his goodness unto you: for if he had not kept you, you had run out, and miscarried, as well as others; for you do not bear the root, but the root you. And how know you, but you have been spared for such a time as this, like Queen Esther, to attend the king's presence, that you may be instruments to divert the evil purposes of the enemy of the holy seed? And that many, fallen into their snares and temptations, by the spirit of meekness in you, who stand by faith, might be restored, to the making of you shine more gloriously in the firmament of
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God's power, through the converting of many from the evil of their way: and blessed shall you be of the Lord, who are found diligent in this work. For this is my testimony for the Lord this day, That another gospel shall never be preached, to gather men and women to God; for it is the everlasting gospel: and those which know it to be the gospel of their salvation, can say, that there is more than a bare opinion, or different judgment, between them and others, that do not believe in the light within, that lighteth every one that cometh into the world, to be sufficient to lead to God, through Christ, from whom it comes: yet it is possible for one, that once knew the truth in measure, and after departed from it, to think as slightly of the truth, as those that never knew it. It was not Dives, but Lazarus, in the parable, that knew the difficulty of the passage into Abraham's bosom; while Dives thought the way passable at pleasure. Nevertheless, this gospel must more and more spread and shine, in its glory and beauty, until the man of sin be fully discovered in all minds and hearts, that the kingdoms of this world may become the Lord's, and his Christ's.

Whatever hath fallen out, or shall yet be suffered to come to pass, to obstruct and hinder the work of this gospel, shall in the conclusion be ordered of God to work together for its advancement, as if such things had never been: for those flames of fire, which are and shall be rendered upon those that obey not the gospel, shall make those, that are sanctified through obedience thereunto, the more to glorify God: and the perishing of others, through unbelief, shall make those that are saved, through faith, the more to admire the riches of God's love and mercy unto them.

Therefore,

Therefore, Arise thou that fittest in the dust, and sing forth the high praises of God; and come forth of the pit, and out of the prison-house, and shew thyself forth; for the day of God's mercy is come, even the set time to pity Zion, that mourned in the dust, because God had forsaken her: and thou that shakest thyself, like a man of war; and rejoicest like a giant to run his race, notwithstanding the storms and winds, clouds and mists, that may seem to interpose, thou shalt yet sing in the heights of Zion: and for thy sake am I stirred in spirit, that all bonds may be broken, and all weights and burdens laid aside, and the yoke of Christ put on every neck; that with one shoulder we may all draw in the work of the Lord, until the fallow ground of peoples hearts, whereon groweth the briars and thorns, be plowed up, that the seed of the kingdom may sprout and grow in them also, until the nations become like the garden of Eden, and the mountain of the house of the Lord be on the top of all mountains, that the nations may flow unto it for ever. Amen.

10. Now I have a few words unto you, sons and daughters of men, into whose hands this testimony may come, of what judgment or persuasion soever you are; and it is by way of advice, to take heed that you harden not your hearts against the truth, because of any miscarriages in those that do profess it. It is no new thing for a Judas to betray his master, and a *Demas* to embrace this present world; nor for all Asia to turn aside for a time. Remember, thou art doing the same thing daily, and knowest it not, in thy heart and spirit, against the strivings of God's good Spirit in thy own bosom: remember that Sarah's laughing at the angel's message, was rebuked by the angel; and Hagar was cast out, with her son, for his offence,
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who mocked Isaac after he was born, which by the apostle is called persecution ; saying, As he that was born after the flesh (referring to Ishmael) persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, (referring to Isaac) so it is now. I know many professors, and others, are as big with expectation, concerning the downfall of the Quakers, so called, and the truth which they profess, as Rebekah was with her twins; and as ignorant of the Quakers bottom and foundation, as she was of the meaning of their striving in her womb, until she inquired of the Lord ; as it is written. Therefore take heed of speaking evil of things ye know not, lest ye render yourselves more like beasts than men, in so doing. Say not, as those mockers did, Where is the promise of his coming ? Where is that perfection you speak of, and that union you glory in ? lest your bands become strong.

The doctrine of perfection doth stand, and shall stand for ever, which the Quakers asserted ; for they never assigned any particular man unto the world, as lodging it there ; but Christ the promised seed, and those that abide in him ; and such, the Scripture saith, sinneth not, because in him is no sin. The Quakers asserted perfection attainable through God's grace, and that every Christian ought so to believe, in despite of the Devil's enmity ; which priests and professors opposed : and this was the question between us and them ; and not whether this or that particular man hath attained it. And so it stands firm and safe ; notwithstanding what the evil eye doth, or can spy out against it.

For the union we speak of with God, and one with another, we never placed it in the name, or outward form only, but in the light of Christ ; not talked of, but walked in. But if any convinced of the light of Christ, say, They have fellowship with us in him, and yet walk in darkness, they lie,
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and do not the truth; for no lie is of the truth: and their practice is a sufficient evidence to convict them, without any farther trial: for, according to Christ's doctrine, the remaining of sin, is a sufficient conviction of blindness; as he said to the Jews, Because you say you see, therefore your sin remains, &c. But all that do walk in the light, as he is in the light, have fellowship one with another. We never asserted, that all convinced, must needs be converted; nor that all converted must needs always keep in that state, and could never depart from it: but that every one's safety was, in keeping to the grace, whereby they should know how the grace kept them; as it is written, Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments: and it is but our reasonable service, that we should do as much for God, as we have done for the Devil; as it is written, Rom vi. 19. "As ye have yielded your members servants to unrighteousness, even so yield your members servants to righteousness," &c. How this hath been done unto the motions of lust within, may easily be known; even so may the motions of the good Spirit within, be known and yielded unto, which is but most just and equal. So that the union with God, and one with another, in the light of Jesus Christ, amongst all that abide and walk in it, stands as firm as ever it did, between the faithful and watchful in spirit: for we never held out a fellowship and communion between light and darkness, nor between good and evil; but in the good only. Therefore your hopes and expectations shall be abortives, and your eyes shall fail in your holes, who look to see your desires accomplished upon the truth, and children of it. Therefore, as you love your own souls, cease such thoughts and expectations; for you will but harden your hearts
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the more thereby, and be disappointed at last: but bow your necks unto the yoke of Christ, which will convey you to the true rest for your souls, and shew unto you, as in the light you believe, the end of all your observations, and carnal ordinances, and beggarly elements, to the rending the vail off your hearts; which will remain and continue, until Christ be witnessed, the sum and substance of all things to you, and in you, through the application of his Holy Spirit, and not through any imagination, or traditional credulity, in yourselves.

11. A few words to you, little children, that are ready to be troubled in your minds, because of the prosperity of the wicked, and your own trials increasing upon you, and it may be such as you never expected to meet withal: saying within yourselves, Have I forsaken all that is near and dear to me in this world, to embrace the truth? And have I left all other societies and fellowships, to come into the fellowship of truth; expecting I should never have found those, professing the same truth with me, and such as were convinced before me, to differ among themselves; or that any such fruits should have been brought forth by any that profess the truth? Nay, saith some weak one, I would have thought hardly of such in time of my profession, as not fit for the fellowship I then was in. I know the enemy tempts thee sorely, sometimes by raising doubts in thy mind, whether it be truth or no, which thou hast received, and suffered for; but after a little combating with him about this, thou shakest him off, as that liar which from the beginning thou wast troubled with: but then he comes upon thee afresh, with a new assault, to justify this man, and to condemn the other; and to take part with this thing, and to condemn the
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other; which doth so bewilder thy mind, and darken thy understanding, that thou art at a stand what to do, sometimes liking, and sometimes disliking, this and the other thing; the enemy suggesting to thee, that thou hadst better never have received the truth: and thou seeest, saith the enemy within, what thou hast gotten through all thy hardships and sufferings; more trouble, vexation, and disquieting of spirit, than ever thou knewest before: thou resolving at sometimes to sit still, and to meddle no more, and never to come to meetings with God's people again, but to pass away thy time with as little trouble to thee as thou canst; thinking sometimes to take this course, and sometimes the other, to get ease to thy mind; or else to mourn away thy days in sorrow.

I have this to say to thee, thou poor soul, Keep thou thy own habitation with God, in the measure of his grace committed to thee; and meddle not with other mens matters, neither those that are given to change; but shut out all that would interrupt thy communion with God, and with his people, that keep their minds out of strife, and that follow those things which are of good report, and which make for peace; these things follow: and keep in love with all those that love the truth, and are tender of it, and seek its advancement above all; who have no end to self, nor to this world, nor the things of it; but unto purity and holiness, and a close walking with God in Spirit; and thy temptations will wear away, and those broken bones shall be set again unto a firmer union with God, and his truth and people, than ever thou wast in before; and then the broken bones shall rejoice, and thou conclude, that in faithfulness God hath suffered thee to be tried, that thou mayest learn obedience by all thou hast suffered; and also to understand,
that

that it was to make thee abhor thyself more than ever thou couldst have done, had not these things befallen thee; that, with Job, thou mayest attain to a knowledge of God beyond the hearing of the ear; which will reward thee double for all thy sufferings and trials, and make thee keep close unto the Lord, and to the fellowship of saints for ever: that through thy experiences many wanderers may be converted to God, and thyself established in his blessed truth for ever, and become a pillar in God's house, and go no more forth; but be found to the praise of the riches of the glory of his grace, whose mercies, wilt thou say, endure for ever.

Thus having finished my testimony at this time, in faithfulness to God, and his requirings, in what plainness he was pleased to bring things to my remembrance; desiring to answer the least good in all hearts and consciences, but not to regard the evil will of any, nor to please the minds of the unstable multitude, whether professors or profane; knowing the one sort, like the Jews, will cry Hosanna to day, and crucify him to-morrow; and the other, like the Barbarians, who sometimes concluded the apostle a murderer, and presently changed their mind, and said, He was a God: for I am more a freeman, than to sacrifice my just liberty to any man's humour; and more a Christian, than to ask any man leave to perform my duty to God, or to hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons; but in Christ alone, the author of it, who is God over all, blessed for ever.

TWENTY CASES OF CONSCIENCE

PROPOUNDED TO THE

B I S H O P S,

OR OTHERS, WHO ARE CALLED

F A T H E R S I N G O D,

FOR THEM TO ANSWER;

That the Blind may not be turned out of the Way, nor the People perish for lack of Knowledge: and that the Way of Truth may be known from the Way of Error.

The which may also serve as a Glasse, to shew to the Ignorant the Spots and Deformities in the Way of their Worship.

As also, some of the Reasons, why many Godly People refuse to Worship with the Multitude.

1. **S**EEING the Scripture saith, That we may not do the least evil, that good may come of it; and that no man can redeem his brother out of the pit, nor be a ransom for his soul; but every man is to be persuaded in his own mind, and so to obey.

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether any person, or persons counsel whatsoever, should

should be embraced and followed, until, or unless a man be first persuaded of it, and satisfied concerning it, in his own judgment and conscience, without sinning against God, and procuring his displeasure, for his lame sacrifice, and blind obedience?

II. Seeing we read in the Scriptures, in sundry places, That every man must give an account of himself to God, and appear before his judgment-seat, to give an account for things done in the body, whether they be good or evil; and the soul that sinneth he shall die: these things rightly and truly considered,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man that thus believes, may, without sin, at any time, or in any ways, go, or do, contrary to his conscience, and persuasion herein; notwithstanding any threats, or penalties, or laws, made by any man or men, to the contrary, whatsoever?

III. Seeing the great apostle saith, Follow me, as I follow Christ; and the apostle John saith, He that believeth in Christ, ought himself so to walk, even as he also walked; and the apostle Peter saith, Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps: these things truly believed,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether such a man, that is so persuaded, as aforesaid, may follow any example, or examples, in any men, who walk either contrary, or not according to the practices of Christ and his apostles, before-mentioned, without sinning against the light and grace of Christ in his own conscience?

IV. Seeing Peter and John were commanded by the council, To speak no more at all, nor to teach in the name of Jesus; to which Peter and the other apostles answered, We ought to obey God, rather

than men. And seeing Pharaoh king of Egypt, commanded Israel to stay in the land, and to observe his orders, and charged them with rebellion for their refusal; yet did they not observe his command, but chose to obey the Lord, in passing to the land which he had given them: and seeing Daniel, and the three children, refused Nebuchadnezzar's command, notwithstanding the great penalty that was to ensue,

The case of obedience to be resolved, is, Whether disobedience to men, and their laws, may not sometimes, and in some cases, be justly esteemed and accounted obedience to God, and may be done as truly for conscience-sake, as submission and subjection may be said to be unto other commands, that are lawful and just?

V. Seeing the Old Testament saith, That every thing in difference, was to be confirmed out of the mouth of two or three witnesses; not mentioning or commanding that the witnesses should swear; but on the contrary hath provided, that the false witnesses, for their testimony, shall suffer the same punishment, that he should have done against whom they witnessed, had their testimony been true: and seeing that the kings of Israel were neither made by an oath, nor the people sworn to subjection: and in the New Testament, there is no example of any man, that ever swore, or took a formal oath, by virtue of God's command, but on the contrary, there is a cloud of witnesses against all swearing; as Christ saith in Matt. v. Swear not at all; and the apostle Paul changes the word swear, into the word confess to God, in two of his epistles, Rom. xiv. Phil. ii. since Christ is come to do that in and amongst true believers, which an oath did, or was taken to do, in the times of the law, which was to end strife and debate; and James the apostle saith,

Above

Above all things, Swear not, neither by heaven nor earth, nor any other oath. These things truly believed and received in simplicity as they are spoken,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man that thus believeth, and is satisfied in his heart and conscience concerning the same, may lawfully, without sinning against the God of heaven and earth, take any oath, or swear at all in any case; notwithstanding any penalties, laws, or commands of men, to the contrary whatsoever? And whether, if such an one should swear, either to please the king, or to procure his own liberty, and save his estate, whether any of these can become an atonement for him, or pacify God's wrath and anger against him for his sin?

VI. Seeing the Scripture saith, That the saints ought not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but so much the more to meet, as the day approacheth; and if there be a drawing back, or forsaking of meeting together, after illumination and knowledge of God's way and worship, and seeing the Scripture saith, God's soul will take no pleasure in such an one; and that nothing may be expected by him, who so draws back, but a fearful looking for of judgment, to devour and destroy those who so refuse to meet together;

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether such person or persons may, or ought, without sinning against God, and his, or their own consciences, refuse to meet with the saints to worship God, and wait upon him, according to such a discovery and manifestation; notwithstanding any decree, proclamation, or commandment whatsoever, to the contrary?

VII. Seeing the Scripture saith, He that giveth flattering titles to men, displeaseth the Lord: and the apostle saith, He that respects mens persons,

commits sin: and Christ saith, How can ye believe, while ye seek honour one of another? And his very enemies bore witness for him, That he respected no man's person; and it is left upon record, as the commendation of Mordecai, That he would not bow to the person of Haman, though the second man in the kingdom:

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man that believes, and is persuaded concerning the truth of these things, may, without sinning against his God, and provoking him to wrath, give flattering titles to men, or respect their persons; notwithstanding any custom or command from men to the contrary whatsoever?

VIII. Seeing the Scripture saith, That they that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution: and Christ saith, Blessed are you when men persecute, and hate you for my name's sake; and he that will be Christ's disciple, must suffer with him, and take up his cross daily, and follow him, that he may find rest to his soul; and he that will reign with him, must suffer with him; and those that follow the Lamb, are said to go through great tribulations:

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man that is persuaded concerning the truth of these things, may, without sinning against his God, avoid or fly from suffering for Christ, though his suffering be to the loss of liberty, estate and life also, if he be thereunto called, without sinning against Christ, and denying him before men; notwithstanding any command from any of the sons of men to the contrary?

IX. Seeing many say, They are the apostles successors, and sent by Christ; and yet neither walk in his steps, nor his apostles, but contrary to both; wearing sumptuous apparel, and faring deliciously every day, and dwelling in great palaces; when as
Christ

Christ had not whereon to lay his head; and his apostles laboured with their hands, lest they should make the gospel chargeable; and it was their meat and drink to do their Master's will; and some of them said, they could do nothing against, but for the truth; and they had learned to be content in every condition: and seeing those that say they are their successors, and cannot be content in any condition; but are changing with times, and seeking great things for themselves:

The case of conscience to be resolved is, Whether a man that is truly enlightened with the knowledge of these things, may give the tenth of his increase, or otherwise maintain and uphold these aforesaid, who walk contrary to the steps, practices, and examples, of Christ and his apostles, without sinning against Christ, in his so doing, and bring upon himself God's plagues, for not coming out of their sins?

X. Seeing the Scripture saith, The kingdom of heaven cometh not with outward observation, lo, here, or, lo, there; neither standeth in meats or drinks, but in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Spirit: and a man believing these things,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether for such an one, to go after such outward observations, and to join with those that cry them up, and impose them upon great penalties, as the true religion, and best reformed church, is not a sin against God, and a neglecting of his command, who saith, Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will receive you?

XI. Seeing the Scripture saith, God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and truth; and that he seeketh such to worship him,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man that is persuaded of the truth thereof,
and

and is acquainted with God's Spirit, and sees men going on to set up a form without the power, and to set up deceit and hypocrisy, quite out of truth and sincerity, and that man join with them in their dissimulation, as to thank God, as they call it, for their election before time, and vocation in time; and for their sanctification and justification, and future hope of glorification; and at the same time say, Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep; and there is no health in us: and then say again, As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end? Whether a man may, with a safe conscience, or can, by the spirit of truth, say these things, without great sin and iniquity against God; and as being guilty both of mockery and lying? for though these things are spoken by drunkards, swearers, and liars, (Now) yet it was not so from the beginning, neither shall it be so in the world without end, nor when the people shall be all righteous, Isa. lx. 21. and there shall be no destroyer upon all the Holy Mount, nor any that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie.

XII. Seeing the Scripture saith, That the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is not of his; and that the prayers of the wicked are abomination unto God; and he that hath a male in his flock, and offers to God an unclean thing, is accursed: and the Spirit of God is called the spirit of prayer, and supplication; and seeing that necessities and wants are the ground of petitions and complaints: and seeing the Scripture saith, That Christ hath lighted every man that cometh into the world, with the true light; that thereby they may see their wants and necessities,

necessities, and from the sense thereof, and in that light, pray unto God for supplies;

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man that thus believes, and in his heart is persuaded of the truth thereof, may, or ought to conform to, and join in, and with such prayers, as are artificially made, and by the prophane performed, and put up to God, whom they know not, without sin and wickedness against the pure God? Seeing, He that names the name of Christ, is to depart from iniquity; neither can any man say in truth, that Christ is Lord, but by the Holy Ghost: and for these prayers and services to be imposed upon him, as long as he lives, without any variation, both in that time when he was without grace, and after, if he came to receive grace; and also when he comes to be strong in grace; and if he goes about to depart or separate from the prayers and services aforesaid, he thereby makes himself a prey. Whether this be not great wickedness in God's sight, and provokes to jealousy the eyes of his glory, and will bring swift destruction upon him that departs not from them?

XIII. Seeing the Scripture saith, The church is in God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that it is the ground and pillar of truth, and without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, built up of living stones, a holy temple in the Lord;

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man may meet with a company of drunkards, swearers and liars, and proud men and women; and say as they say, and sit when they sit, and stand when they stand, and sing and pray, when and what they sing and pray, and curse and bless, when they curse and bless; and call them a church, and the things and gestures which they perform, God's worship and service, without great abomination before

fore the Lord, and sinning against God and his own conscience, considering a church, in the New Testament, is so described as aforesaid?

XIV. Seeing England is called a church, and all the people within the territories thereto belonging, are said to be members thereof: and you who are called Bishops, and Fathers in God, are said to take upon you the government, and oversight thereof; and say, You follow the examples of Christ, and the apostles therein; who accounted it their meat and drink to do the will of God, and to spend, and be spent, for his name, and the good of his people; preaching the word in season and out of season; confirming the weak, and visiting the sick; and by sound doctrine, and a godly life, strove to convince gainfayers, and to stop the mouths of opposers: these things duly considered in our hearts,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether all those who have gone and strayed from your ways, not only because the name of a Bishop hath been taken up, and the work neglected; but also because the way of your promotion and climbing up, hath rather seemed to be like those John speaks of in his 16th chapter, who are said, Not to come in at the true door, but are climbed up another way, than those bishops did, whom Paul speaks of in his epistles to Timothy and Titus, who saith, That a bishop must be blameless, and a lover of good men; not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not covetous: but seeing the contrary qualifications are found amongst those that say they are bishops, whether we should not sin against the living God, and his righteous law, if we should not bear witness against such, and their ways? And if we did not do so, whether the God of heaven and earth would not leave us to be partakers of their
plagues,

plagues, because we refused, and were afraid to bear witness for him against their sins?

XV. Seeing the Scripture speaketh of being baptized into one body, and into Christ; whereby such put on Christ: and that there is one baptism, and one faith, and one hope of our calling, and one Lord Jesus Christ:

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man, that thus believes, may, without sinning against God, call sprinkling a little water in the face of a child, and signing it with the sign of the cross, and to have three or four men and women present, to promise, that the child shall forsake the devil, and all his works, and pomp and vanities of this world; whenas these promising persons (it may be) never look after the child more, nor take care what becomes of it; but themselves bring forth the works of the devil daily in the whole course of their lives? Whether a man may call this that baptism before named, or a baptizing into the congregation of God's holy church, by those actions, persons, and gestures aforesaid, without sinning against God?

XVI. Seeing the Scripture speaks of David's not being puffed in mind, and of his mourning by reason of his sin; and of his watering his couch with his tears: and of having all his bones broken, by reason of his grief, &c.

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether men, whose hearts are hardened in sin, and who never truly shed tears for sin, and are both puffed in mind, and filled with pride, and seeing we, with others, who know this to be true by daily experience, may lawfully sing these words and sayings of David, and those aforesaid, that believes these things to be done in formality and hypocrisy, may join with them in these things, and call this practice

practice the worship of God, and a singing to the praise and glory of God, without being guilty of deep provocation and hypocrisy against God?

XVII. Seeing the Scripture speaks of false prophets, both in the Old and New Testament, and tells us, That we may know them by their fruits, and those marks and characters, laid down in the scripture to discover them by: as, That they are such as preach for hire, and divine for money; and seek for gain from their quarter; and prepare war against, or go to law with those, who refuse to put into their mouths, or to maintain them; and Christ saith, We shall know them by their fruits; as that they are called of men Rabbi, or Lord, or Master; and that they love greetings in the market-place; or to be honoured before the people, or to have men put off their hats unto them, or to stand bare before them; and they love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and will have the chiefest places in the synagogues, or those places now called churches; and for their habit, they go in long robes of black, like the Chymarims: and if people will not pay them, they will prove like thorns and thistles, to scratch, prick, and tear people; and of such men, or trees, Christ saith, We must not expect to gather either grapes or figs: and Christ saith farther, that we may thoroughly know them, They are wolves in sheeps clothing, or wearing white upon black; but inwardly ravening and devouring, being one thing in their words and profession, and another in life and conversation. And therefore,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man may lawfully, without sinning against God, and transgressing the scriptures of truth, either hear or follow such men, who bear, as in their foreheads, the marks and fruits aforesaid, or maintain them, by feeding their covetous minds with hire,

hire, or paying as their maintenance aforesaid? Or rather, whether a man that feareth God, is not bound in conscience to bear witness against them?

XVIII. Seeing the Papists plead for a continued succession, and those that are called Protestant bishops do the same; and both of them being out of the life and practices, and principles in many things, of Christ and his apostles; as by the scriptures of truth doth appear, being understood plainly, as they are spoken, without forced and construed meanings:

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether that kind of succession, which they both plead for, be that succession which a man must arrive unto himself, or he cannot be a true minister of Christ? Or whether the true, necessary, and rightful derivative succession, stands not rather in that same spirit and power, which the apostles were endued withal from on high, and whereby they were made able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; and according to which they spake, as it gave them utterance? And farther considering, that the natural or outward succession, before mentioned, is according unto the first priesthood, which stood in a natural or outward line and descent, and was made by a carnal commandment, and could not continue by reason of death: but Christ was not so made a minister or priest, but after another order, and according to another law, viz. The power of an endless life: according to which the apostles were, and all true ministers are made, who are truly the successors of Christ, and his apostles? So that these three questions, for the resolving of the case of conscience aforesaid, are necessary to be resolved:

First, Whether either Papist or Protestant, so called, can derive unto themselves the continued apostolical

apostolical succession, aforesaid, from Christ downwards to this day?

Secondly, Whether the succession aforesaid be sufficient, without the gift of the Spirit, to make a minister of the gospel?

Thirdly, Whether the spirit and power from on high be not of itself, without any farther act or thing, as from man, or by man, sufficient, and that only wherein stands the authority that brings unto unity and uniformity, and is according to that way and manner that the apostles were made ministers? For they said, They believed, and therefore they spake: and when it pleased God to reveal his Son in them, then they went and preached the gospel; and did not stay for man's commission, but ministered from that; and not of man, nor by man, nor from man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ, as aforesaid; whose steps the true ministers follow unto this day, and have Christ's presence with them, according to promise, who said, And lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world.

XIX. Seeing the outward, natural, or personal derivative succession, is so disputable among those called Christians; and considering, if it could be proved, yet its sufficiency, without the Holy Ghost, is opposed and denied; and seeing, as they say, the authority and verity of the scripture depends upon a belief and knowledge of the succession outward and personal, as aforesaid; and so from, or by, the tradition of the church to be received, as they speak. These things truly weighed,

The case of conscience to be resolved, is, Whether a man must not know, and be turned to something within himself, though not of himself, which only can give unto him the certain knowledge both of the truth and authority of the scripture, which gift of grace in himself, is as a witness in him,

him, and seals unto, and assures him of the truth of what is written, whereby his own heart answers the hearts of those holy men who writ the scriptures, as face answers face in a glass, and whereby he hath hope and comfort through the scriptures? Or whether a man must believe and depend upon them, who say, they are the apostles successors, and have received their power from Peter; but do imitate him in little at all, besides in his denying his Master, and dissembling for fear of the Jews; for both which he was blamed and reprov'd? And also considering, that both Popish inquisitions, and those called Protestants compulsions by pains and prisons are an infallible note or mark of the false church and ministry; both which are described by their compelling all both small and great, to worship the beast and his image, by outward pains and punishments; which those that follow the Lamb, and are washed with his blood, are saved and redeemed from; so that they cannot bow down, nor submit unto them.

XX. Seeing that several Protestant writers, as Chillingworth, who was a man of note, and others, who have written against the Papists, and have affirmed in opposition to them and their tenet, That right reason is the judge of controversy; and every man's particular reason, within himself, is judge for himself, as hath been affirmed, and that truly; and seeing that God's faithful people do believe and preach, That God's gift of grace and light in man, is the first principle of pure religion, and judge of controversy; unto which a man must have his mind turned, and in it believe, before he can worship God acceptably: and seeing they agree with the true Protestant principle herein, and their lives being according to what they profess and teach; and considering those, who call themselves

Protestants, and the apostles successors, but are not true to the Protestant principles, in that they imprison and punish men, merely for things relating to their consciences; and thereby condemn their professed principles by their practices, and so make themselves transgressors, and therefore justify the people of God aforesaid, who separate from them as such transgressors. These things duly considered of,

The case of conscience to be resolved is, Whether those called Protestants aforesaid, who have apostatized from their principles, and lost both the life and power of religion, should come out of the apostacy, and return to the first and primitive principle? Or whether those, who are in the true principle and practices, and retain their integrity, should go into the apostacy unto them; seeing the Scripture saith, Go not thou to them, but let them come to thee?

P O S T S C R I P T.

THESSE things are written, not to kindle dissension, nor to blow up the coals of contention; but rather for satisfaction both to others, who are inquiring what the reason is, why many godly people separate from those called Bishops? Or why they do not join in common with the multitude? As also, to stir up and mind those of their duty, who say they are Fathers in God, That they may make it appear, if they are such, and that by a godly life, and sound arguments, to convince those that are out of the way; that all may be reclaimed, who have erred from the way of life, and be brought back again to the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls; that there may be one Shepherd, and one

one sheep-fold: and that there may be no noise of a hammer heard in the rebuilding of the temple, nor any cries from prisons, against those who call themselves reformers in the church, but that they may effect the work, to the rejoicing of Zion, and shaming of all her enemies: not by might, nor power, nor whips, nor gaols; but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts, which shall certainly overturn them, if they refuse to trust to it; or only and alone to make use of it in the work, which they call the Lord's work.

Written about the year 1667.

A N
E P I S T L E

To all that are Young in the Truth,

A N D

L A T E L Y C O N V I N C E D ;

Who walk with, and assemble amongst, the People of God called Quakers; that they may escape the Wiles of Satan, and continue and walk in the Way of Righteousness.

WE call to remembrance the labours, hardships, and inward travailling pangs and throws of the true gospel ministers in the days of old; and we know the same in our day, in our measures, which the apostle compared to a travailling woman, in bringing forth her child into the world; saying, Of whom I travail in birth again, till Christ be formed in you.

And blessed be the Lord, there are many witnesses in this our day, not only of instructors, but of such as, through deep travail, have begotten many to God: and these fathers, being once children themselves, retain in their fatherly bowels, the sense of the childish state of those who are come inwardly to feel some renewings in the spirit
of

of their minds, by the gospel power, in order to the overturning of all their old building, that now, like to Jerusalem of old, for their despising and rejecting the true prophets, There was not to be one stone left upon another.

The old serpent perceiving his kingdom to be shaken, by the operation of that divine light, grace, and power of God, which will admit of no terms any longer to be made with him; or any subjection or compliance in the least to be yielded to him, or to any of his works, every plant now being to be plucked up, that the heavenly Father hath not planted; yea, the fig-tree that bears no fruit, whereby the hungry may be relieved, must wither by the curse of his displeasure.

Then this crooked serpent, that is more subtiler than all the beasts of the field, twists and turns himself every way, if possible, to entangle again those that are turning from his thick darkness, to Christ's marvellous light, that hath shewed them where they have been, with whom they have been conversing, and what they have been doing in the dark, and what path they must walk in, if they will arrive at the land of rest.

And thus we found judgment to begin at the house of God, in order to the overthrowing and purging out of all that had defiled, that our bodies might become the temples of the Holy Spirit.

Oh, the many devices that the enemy useth, that true judgment might not take place! and when it did take place, how did he transform himself, to make us believe his suggestions, viz. That now we had lain long enough in the furnace, and the tin and dross was all gone, and nothing now was left but pure gold. But when we at any time lent an ear to these his delusions, we found by experience, that which he suggested to be gold, was

but tin and counterfeit metal; and that he lied unto us, when he said, We had been long enough in the refining fire: although the fleshly part was glad of these tidings, hoping thereby its life would have been spared, and that a birth of its womb would serve for a sacrifice; for we found it was not the male of the flock, but an Ishmael instead of Isaac, in which the Lord took no delight.

So that we saw, we must into the furnace again, and there continue all the appointed time of the Father, till, indeed, we were changed into the state of the precious sons of Zion, truly comparable to fine gold.

And this was the way in which we waited, under the great tribulations and sore judgments; that we might not only be convinced, and take up a rest there, in that we believed the words of truth, and could dispute for it; but that we might be converted, and, in the spirit of our minds, thoroughly renewed; that we might be as Saviours upon Mount Zion, and as workers together in the gospel of our Lord Jesus, to help and strengthen the weak brethren and sisters, and speak a word in due season to the weary soul: which work was not at all wearisome to us, though our hazards and hardships were great sometimes, to get a hand to the helpless ones; yet when once we got but a little hold, and we felt them coming nearer to truth and us, then our hearts rejoiced, and our souls were right glad.

And they whose beauty was hid as with bull-rushes, and smeared as with mire, then they appeared to be goodly children: these were sweet encouragements unto us, greatly refreshing our bowels, to behold these prisoners thus shewing themselves forth, which made us, with many more faithful brethren, not to love our lives unto the death;

death; but even for the truly good man, dare to die, when called thereunto.

The spirit of that blessed man began so to stir in our bosoms, that we could even (in a sense) have wished ourselves accursed for our kindred, acquaintance and countrymen, that they also might feel what we felt; knowing upon what ground they stood, and what zeal they, as well as we, many of them had: but the true knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jesus, was wanting; the vail of observations and carnal apprehensions being yet over the heart, which nothing can remove but Christ; who is the life and light of men, and glory of his people Israel.

There are many witnesses yet alive, who can testify to these things, and much more than we intend at this time to mention; only some few particulars we may hint at, to the end, that no travellers towards Zion, may turn aside from the footsteps of the flocks of the companions, nor err from the right way, as it was received and walked in at the beginning.

O! what fear and holy dread was upon our spirits, lest we should think our own thoughts, or give way in the least to the fleshly motions of our own minds, or admit any of the cares for the things of this life, or give way to any inordinate affection to the nearest and dearest relations, lest thereby we should be hindered in the day of our espousals, from being chaste virgins unto Christ!

Likewise, what carefulness of our words! what watchfulness to our ways! what heedfulness of our company that we might keep our consciences clear; that our lives and conversations might shew unto all men, that we are under the government of Jesus, that we might be manifest to God's witness in

every man's bosom; and in these things the Lord blessed us.

Again, How careful were we, that we might not lose one tittle of our testimony, by the keeping to the plain language; that we might not lift up the proud spirit in any, by mincing in that particular.

And also, How did our moderation appear unto all men, in our meats, and drinks, and apparel? &c.

And, How inwardly retired did we walk, fearing to draw out the minds of any into unprofitable discourses; having a principal regard unto the inward exercise of our minds, lest we should lose our own conditions; which made us prize retired meetings, in which we were sensible of the teachings of the true prophet from the false, in ourselves, and others? Then we were sensible of the living word to take deep root downward, that from thence we might bring forth fruit upward, to the praise of God: desiring ye may walk in these steps.

Time would fail to tell of the poverty of spirit, humility of heart, lowliness of mind, brokenness of soul, contempt of the world, not only of its glory and riches, but of all its wisdom and knowledge, counting it dross and dung, in comparison of the excellent knowledge now manifested in us, through the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot pass by that godly fear, which at that day was in our hearts, lest, by discoursing, or reading many books, we should awaken again the old wisdom and understanding, and again get the notion of things in the carnal comprehension, and thereby lose our experimental knowledge

ledge of the inward work of God in our own particulars: from which experience we are careful to speak about the things of God; finding it our safety and preservation, to keep to our own measures; and not to deck ourselves with the words only, or other mens gifts; nor yet to pride ourselves with our former experiences and knowledge, though God's jewels, according to the prophet's words.

These things being witnessed in the beginning, we desire, exhort, and advise all, especially those that are young in the truth, and newly convinced of the everlasting way, and make profession of the same, That they be careful to avoid all those things which the godly fear caused us to avoid at the beginning; and so much the more, because our enemies and opposers are waiting for all occasions to asperse the holy truth, and the true professors of it: in which practice they follow the steps of the enemies of God in former times, who not only watched for mischief, to make offenders for a word, but were ready to fall upon the hindermost and weakest amongst them; and that when they were but newly circumcised, or convinced of the truth; even while they were yet sore, or in the deep exercise of their minds.

Then if they could draw them out, to dispute of any thing beyond their own measure, they will boast of that, and charge any advantage, that they have gotten from the weak, or newly convinced, upon the whole body; and put us, either to deny the unlearned words that were spoken, or them that speak them, though their intentions were right, these men being willingly ignorant of, as well as envious against the truth, and them that walk therein.

Therefore

Therefore cast not pearls before swine, lest they turn again and rent you: so out of our love to, and care for the truth, we desire all such friends, and convinced people, to keep to their own measures, trusting more in and unto the simplicity of Christ manifest in themselves, than to any wisdom, parts, or arguments of their own, in the earthly or natural comprehension.

For we have found by many years experience, that the true simplicity, and inward poverty of spirit, God hath always had regard unto, beyond all flourishing expressions, and gilded speeches, that may charm, and take the outward ear, but never deliver the prisoner out of the pit.

Neither hath the work of God thus far prospered by such weapons of war, or words of man's wisdom; but by a secret virtue, that always attended the truly poor in spirit, that did appear what they were only by grace, and its work upon the conscience; and to this day do all the true labourers work with the same means.

And if you that are newly convinced, would be kept lively in your conditions to Godward, your growth must be, only in walking in the light, and keeping in the grace of God; and then for words and knowledge, they will come fast enough upon you, as God hath service for you: and then, by so doing, you will both save yourselves, and them that hear you; and also, frustrate them that wait for evil.

From which grace of God these things are written, and in the same commended to your consciences; desiring heartily, that in your own measures of the same, you may be preserved amongst the faithful witnesses of Jesus, till your days determined

terminated come to be accomplished, and you finish
your course with joy.

This from us, who labour and travail in the
work of the gospel, for the advancing of
the name of the Lord, your friends in
God's truth,

London, the 15th of
the 11th month,
1672.

JOHN CROOK,

THOMAS GREEN.

AN

A N

E P I S T L E

TO ALL THAT PROFESS

The Light of Jesus Christ (within) to be
their Guide.

Dear Friends, Brethren, and Sisters,

THAT believe in the inward and spiritual grace which is the light of our Lord Jesus Christ, I salute you all; desiring, that as we received Christ Jesus the Lord, we may all so walk in him. In order hereunto let us all watch, and be mindful how we received the truth at the beginning: which is the subject matter upon my heart, by this epistle, to signify unto you.

For you know, many of us, before we received the truth, as it is in Jesus, felt some stirrings of life; and therefore separated in our judgments and opinions from the generality of our neighbours and countrymen where we dwelt, because of an inward cry from a deep want in our souls, and hungering after the constant enjoyment of that which we with many others professed; but could not find in any thing under the sun.

So poor and needy were we, that the dealings of God with our spirits in that day, in some sense, may be said to resemble God's proceedings with Adam, when he set all the creatures before him, before he gave him a meet-helper; that when he saw he could find out no fit helper for himself
amongst

amongst them all, he might have the more account of the meet-helper that was after given him of God.

So it was inwardly with us, until that trumpet sounded, which directed our minds to the light of Christ Jesus in our own hearts and consciences, which when we believed the report, and made trial of its sufficiency, we soon found the meet-helper for our souls; to wit, the arm of the Lord to be revealed in it, and made so bare, that we knew it to be the Lord's own arm, which brought deliverance to us.

But not from all our enemies at once, yet so that we understood plainly, by certain experience, that the tendency thereof, and the end of its being made bare, was in order to deliver us out of the hands of all our enemies; that being delivered, we might serve God, without a tormenting, distrustful fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our lives.

And the way thereunto, was, by the working of this arm of power in our inward parts, to make a separation within between the precious and the vile, within, and between our own spirits and God's Spirit; between our own wills, and God's will; between our own thoughts, and God's thoughts; and our own ways, and God's ways, &c.

So that we found the great business of regeneration and restoration, was to be wrought within us; and what sorrow, what trouble, what horror, what distress, what wars, and rumours of wars, was within us, many know; and what earthquakes were in divers hearts, which might occasion the name Quaker to be given to some of us; those that were eye-witnesses from the beginning are not ignorant of these things.

O what

O what carefulness, what watchfulness, what circumspection, what awfulness of God, and what dread of his power, was upon our spirits, lest we should speak our own words, work our own works, walk in our own ways, or think our own thoughts! so diligently did we keep a watching over our own hearts, being conscious to ourselves, that we should give an account for every idle word; which caused us to learn a bridle for our tongue, that our words might be few and savoury, ministering grace to the hearers.

How solid were our looks? How grave were our countenances? How serious were our carriages? and how exemplary our behaviours and conversations amongst all that we conversed with, lest we should give occasion for any to speak evil of the blessed truth of the living God?

And if any, though but newly convinced thereof, walked disorderly, or that took up their rest in a bare convincement, and came not be converted to the life and power of God in their own particular, which at the beginning was soon discovered by that spirit of discerning, which in the light we received from God, how conscientiously solicitous were we to admonish, instruct, advise, and counsel them, to take heed of a false rest, or running into, or doing any thing by bare imitation from others? Yet how tender were we of bruising, hurting, stopping, or hindering any stirrings of light and life, lest the lame should be turned out of the way, and the feeble be left behind.

The spirit of holy David was in our hearts, who would not consent that the fore and weary ones, that could not get over the river Bezor, should lose their part of the prey, because they tarried with the stuff; but made it a law and a statute in Israel for ever, that they should have part alike.

And

And how did we love and pity those that took pleasure in the stones of Zion, and favoured the dust thereof? What carefulness was upon us for them? And if we found any but like the young man in Mark, xix. 22. that had been religiously inclined from their youth, how did we love them? Watching for opportunities to communicate some spiritual advice unto them.

As if the new kindred, that Christ speaks of, Matt. xii. to wit, Whosoever shall do my Father's will, the same is my mother, sister, and brother, was now discovered again, and the beauties of holiness were now made manifest, with the many glorious privileges enjoyed thereby, as to see clearly, and know certainly the living God; for hereby came we to know (that we knew him) because of the beauties of holiness, in keeping close to his commandments whereby our love to God, and one to another, was manifest unto all.

For we durst not let in distrustful thoughts of God, nor one of another, faith in him then becoming our law: so that our care was stedfastly and constantly to believe in the light, by which we had seen him; and to dwell in a holy fear, lest we should transgress the law of faith; by which Christ was then kept dwelling in our hearts, and all boasting of self-righteousness was utterly excluded.

But with how much difficulty we kept that faith, you only know, who like valiant soldiers have endured hardship in the good fight of faith; whereby we ourselves were preserved and kept, by the power of God through faith; that we might in due time receive the end of our faith, to wit, the salvation of our souls.

And then, because we believed in the power, as we were moved of it, we spake by it, and such words,

words, like Jonathan's bow, never returned empty; but wounded the hypocrites; like the man that shot the arrow out of simplicity, which smote disguised Ahab between the harness, so that he died; according to the word of the Lord by Micaiah.

You may remember also, how like Ephraim, at first, we were as little children, and spake trembling; saying often in our hearts, as Jacob did of the mountain, where God appeared, to wit, How dreadful is this place? And then how quick and powerful were those words that proceeded from that dread of God in our hearts!

The great mystery of the false prophet, that rides upon the beast, being then inwardly discovered, with the mystery of his name, and number thereof, to wit, the number of a man; which caused us at the beginning so to cry down vain, corrupt man, both in ourselves and others; feeling that God was risen in his power, to confound its wisdom, and to bring his fleshly prudence and policy to nothing: therefore we feared the getting up of that man's part in ourselves, being so battered by the inward judgments of God upon ourselves.

That with good Jehosaphat we said in our hearts, We know not what to do, but our eyes are towards thee, O God: then in this valley of helplessness, straights, poverty, lowliness, and humility, God pleaded with our fleshly part; so that in the day of our distress, although we multiplied our services, and doubled our offerings and observations, to obtain relief; yet Christ refused all these our works, that he might freely make himself known unto us, which in due time he did, as Joseph unto his brethren, and saith that scripture, "there stood no man with him, when he made himself known unto them;" to the exalting of the riches of the glory of his grace in us, whereby sorrow fled away, and our

our own mournful spirits were now made to rejoice in God, and our formerly troubled souls began to magnify our Saviour.

Thus former things passed away, till the tempestuous sea was no more; but joy and gladness was in our dwellings, and the voice of melody in our hearts, and in the midst of our assemblies.

But before we came hither, you know, fellow-travellers, that mount Sinai was first in our way, where we tarried a while, and felt the entertainment of her flames, and heard the voice of words, and the sound of her trumpets, and were witnesses of her terrible earthquakes; yet fled not but with Moses, a remnant drew near unto the thick darkness where God was: but others made this mountain the end of their journey, escaping with their lives still in their own doings; yet these, though they might in profession come out with us thus far, they were not of us, and in time will go out from us, that it may appear, they came not through all the tribulations that a remnant went through.

For from thence a remnant came unto the ministration of the prophets, where they met with openings and prophecies of good things yet to come, before they did come: and here others fled as on the Sabbath day, as if now all labour was at an end; and here they took up their rest, but God did not sanctify it, and therefore glorying and pride got up in these; boasting in the gifted man, soon forgetting all dependance upon the opener, viz. The spirit of truth, to exercise their hearts and tongues in the management of all, for the glory of God, and refreshment of his own seed in the hearts of his people.

But a remnant still travelled on, through John Baptist's cry in the wilderness, Make strait the way of the Lord, and come to repentance from all their

dead words and works, that every valley might be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low, and the crooked made strait, and the rough ways made smooth: then came we to see the salvation of God, to wit, The Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world, whom then we followed; leaving John as some of his own disciples did.

Some also came with us as far as John's baptism, that washeth away the filth of the flesh; but not coming to the baptism of Christ, which washeth all filthiness both of flesh and spirit; also they left us at John: such as these may be compared to the king of Israel, who, at the command of the prophet, smote the ground often; but not smiting it long enough, until the enemy was consumed, he missed of a perfect victory, and full conquest: so do all that take up their rest in any thing short of the Lamb of God.

These things being thus witnessed in the spiritual travails of a remnant at the beginning, let us all search and try our ways, whether we be still following the ancient footsteps of the flocks of the companions, by keeping in the pure separation from the fleshly part in ourselves, ministering only from the ability that God gives; which a remnant, that have kept to their first love, and their garments clean therein, have done, to the praise of the Lord God Almighty for ever.

My exhortation therefore is unto all, but more especially to you that are children of believing parents, and servants to believing masters, with all the younger men, and younger women, convinced in these latter times, knowing that a remnant of these also have kept their garments clean, to examine yourselves, how you came by your profession; Whether you, that are children and servants, received it by tradition, only because of
you

your outward relations, &c. or from the inward work of God upon your own spirits, as those did that received the truth, in the love of God, at the beginning.

For many may endure sufferings, and undergo the reproach of a Quaker, and all for sinister ends; as the Schechemites endured the pain of circumcision to obtain Dinah, Jacob's daughter, and to accomplish their other ends and interests: on these terms they were willing to be one people with the Israelites; as too many on like conditions at this day may be willing to be called Quakers; to whom I say, as Jacob did to Simeon and Levi, You have troubled us, and, as much as in you lies, have made the truth to stink amongst the inhabitants of the land; yet a remnant dare not do so, blessed be the Lord.

But to you that are grieved and troubled, because of these Schechemites, I say to you also, as the Lord on this occasion said unto troubled Jacob, Arise, and let us go up to Bethel, the house of God, and dwell there, Gen. xxxv. where no Schechemites can come.

O the bemoanings of many tender souls at the beginning for the loss of their conditions, sometimes through their own negligence, and sometimes through the enemy's subtilty, weeping like Rachel for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not, are fresh in my remembrance.

But of later times many come amongst us, that in outward appearance may seem to be of us, who as yet never truly knew the meaning of such bemoanings, nor the bitterness of Rachel's tears, but walk as if the gate of entrance into the truth was grown wider, and the path and way thereof broader than it was at the beginning; for how careful

were those that came to witness the truth, at the beginning, to keep low and humble, that they might not be drawn from their own measures, lest their own words should become their burden, and they be condemned in themselves for uttering that, as in the name of God; which came not from the Spirit of the living God!

Therefore it was, that so mightily grew the word of God, and prospered, bringing all down, to the boathing of their persons, in true humility, growing up in every honest heart; that the fruits of the spirit were manifest, as in the apostles days, to wit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law, saith the apostle: and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts: If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit: let us not be desirous, saith the apostle, of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another, &c. But like brethren, saith the apostle, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.

My heart is overcome, when I take a view of God's dealings with us, from the day that he first visited us, unto this present time. My dear friends and brethren, you know how Christ (our Joseph) knew us, when we knew not him; and made himself known to us, as Joseph did unto his brethren, while guilt and fear, distrust and horror, was in their spirits; and then commanded, that they should do unto, and one for another, as he had done unto and for them all.

Therefore let all come down to the remembrancer, the Spirit of Truth, which will distinguish between those that are now arrayed with the beautiful

tiful garments of their youthful days, viz. humility, meekness, righteousness, and the true zeal of the Lord; and those that have only a shew of it: and there let us behold one another in our comely attire, as with the lovely coat of Joseph upon our backs, and the glorious visions of the Almighty in our hearts; judging down all stirrings of envyings and evil surmisings against any; knowing right well, that all such lowings and bleatings are commanded to be slain. For, can we consider the price we cost at first, and the love, care, and watchfulness of our God over us unto this day, of whom a remnant can say, as Jacob did, He hath fed us all our life long: and not be in love one with another?

Can we contemplate of the miseries we have been delivered from, and the mercies we have been made partakers of, since we were a people, and not be humbled before our God, for any unthankfulness and distrust? Can we view the prisons and dungeons, the banishments, and all outward losses, and spoiling of our goods, with the reproachful scoffs, and scornful slightings, by such, that some could say, with holy Job, They were not worthy to eat with the dogs of their flocks; and not be melted before the Lord, and abased, as unworthy of the least of all his mercies?

And can we remember our blessed support under all those sufferings, and the sweet presence of the spirit of Christ in our hearts, saying in us, under all these trials and exercises, as the disciples did, when they returned to Christ their Master, after their weary travels, to wit, We wanted nothing, &c. We wanted no perfumes to take away the noisome smells; we wanted nothing to make our hard lodgings easy; we wanted no pleasant walks to make our straight confinements joyous;

nor we wanted not the society of outward relations, and former acquaintance, to pass away the time; because the Lord our God turned all our hardships into unspeakable comfort, and true contentment?

And shall any now say, God's arm is shortened, that he cannot save; or his ear is heavy, that he cannot hear? God forbid, that all the milk, and wine, and honey, and other fat things, with which we have been often spiritually feasted at God's table, should be all forgotten, and buried in the wilderness; saying in ourselves, as rebellious Israel did of old, to wit, Can he now prepare such a table in the wilderness for us?

But rather let us, with Manoah's wife, the mother of Sampson, conclude, If the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands; neither would he have shewed us all these things, and done so much for us, as he hath done, from the very beginning that we were a people, unto this day.

Therefore lift up your heads, you valiants of Israel, that have come through the dark burning mountain, and through the pleasant and delightful openings and prophecies, through and beyond all outward washings, unto the Lamb of God, that your robes may be washed white in his blood; that thereby you may overcome, and then sit down in that kingdom which cannot be shaken, with weary Abraham, thoroughly-tried Isaac, and wrestling Jacob.

O how glorious are you all in the fight of God, and all his people, even as an army terrible with banners, in the fight of all adversaries! therefore keep your ranks, and march on in your heavenly way, which the Lord of Hosts himself hath set you in, and Babylon the great shall fall before you more
and

and more; for the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it; and you, with all the holy martyrs of Jesus, shall rejoice over her downfall for ever.

These few words farther and again, spring up in my heart to you all, dear friends, brethren, and sisters, to wit, That we may be always mindful how we received the truth at the beginning, and be careful that we travel on with our feet always shod with the same humility, and poverty of spirit, as when we were first shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace: never forgetting, nor changing the poor man's food, to wit, our old water and pulse, for any portion of the rich man's dainties; but still waiting on God, that in due season gives both milk to babes, and strong meat to them of riper age; bearing in our remembrance the great execution that was done at the beginning, by the smooth stones out of the poor shepherd's bag.

Now to the pure harmless feed, that cries in our hearts, I commend you all, that therein as in the cleft of that rock, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail, we all may dwell and abide for ever: so shall the work of the Lord prosper, to his own glory, and all our comforts for ever. Amen.

The 17th of the 6th
month, 1678.

JOHN CROOK.

SICK-BED MEDITATIONS.

Written by JOHN CROOK in time of Suffering.

THOSE that have learned to number their days, and to take notice of the mercies thereof, do not say wherein, but why hath God loved us? Knowing our father was an Amorite, and our mother an Hittite, a base stock by nature, but by marriage to the son, are become related to the great king: and to such I say, as Mordecai did to Esther, How know ye but God hath raised you up for such suffering times as these? Therefore break through all hazards to present your petitions and requests to him, and deliver the poor suffering threatened seed, that people may as fast turn spiritual Jews, as now they do atheists and hypocrites, Esther viii. 17. "And many of the people of the land became Jews."

That which I have to say, is on this wise:

1. Of sufferings.
 2. Of the discouragements thereunto.
 3. Of the privileges and advantages thereby.
- Lastly, The conclusion.

Of Sufferings.

As it is not the death or sufferings, but the cause, that makes the martyr; so is it not the cause, that justifies the manner of every death or suffering, but the spirit in which we suffer: therefore, saith the apostle, To you it is given, not only to believe,

believe,

believe, but also to suffer for Christ. These things are commended to you that are spiritual, because you can judge what I say.

Sufferings are also called afflictions, because they exercise and afflict the creature: and are sometimes immediately, from men, as Christ's sufferings by the Jews; and sometimes more immediately, as his agony in the garden: and are sometimes upon their good names and reputations; as upon Jacob's, by Laban charging him with taking away his cattle, and children: and on Moses and Aaron's, for exalting themselves above the congregation: and on Hannah's, by Eli's saying she was drunk, &c. And on David's, not only by Eliab his brother, but by Absalom his beloved son, saying, O that all men would come to me, and I would do them justice! implying his father David did not. And Christ with his apostles suffered in this kind, he being called a wine-bibber, and countenancer of sinners; and his disciples, with being deceivers, and publishers of new and strange doctrine.

As to sufferings in outward estate; here the devil executed his design upon holy Job; and in gospel times spoiling of goods seem to go before imprisonment, and martyrdom of their bodies; for it is said, They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; this was early.

For afflictions by sickness, and outward weaknesses, it hath been the portion of the people of God in all ages, as Job, Elijah was sick, Timothy, and divers others; yet there wants not those now, that are ready to say, It is a judgment from God upon them; as Job's friends did to him, and Christ's enemies esteemed him smitten of God, &c.

Now I come to those sufferings, that sometimes are both outward and inward together; and those
that

that have been most exercised in this kind, have the best understanding of the sufferings of Christ, and best know the merits and worth thereof; who is said to be a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; such have fellowship with him in his sufferings, and are made conformable to his death. Therefore after his resurrection, he said to his disciples, "Ye are witnesses of these things," Luke xxiv. 48. Although there were then many eye-witnesses of his outward sufferings upon the cross: but his sufferings being inwardly also as he was, when he cried out, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? And some in the prophet's time, are said, for a time, to walk in darkness, and saw no light, &c.

These are sufferings indeed, especially when inward and outward meet together; as when a man is imprisoned for his conscience, or loseth his outward estate, &c. and the soul's enemy also then to be tempting him to distrust and despair, &c. and raising up fears and doubts like a flood: as Christ said to his disciples, Luke xxiv. 38. "Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?" intimating that a troubled state is attended with many thoughts.

Thou must endure the hardship of this warfare, though at present thou see no hope of deliverance; yet in the end the vision will speak, and will not tarry, as many brethren and sisters do witness; and as thou abidest in the judgment, thou wilt be made white, and shalt be numbered amongst the wise, when none of the wicked shall understand, as holy Daniel says, chap. xii. 10.

Concerning the sufferings of the present times, I say unto you in the words of the apostle, 2 Thess. i. 6, 7. "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God
" to

“ to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ; and to you that are troubled, rest with us,” &c. until the just God make manifest those that say they are Protestants, and exhort to read the scriptures, and yet punish them that do, for practising according to their judgment, and best understanding of them; contrary to the very Protestant principles, when first they received that name : and seems more unreasonable, than those that deny the common people to read them, lest, by misunderstanding of them, they fall into error.

But the prophet's words are fulfilling, Isa. lxvi. 5, 6. “ Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified ;” as if they should have said, according to the language of our times, Protestant dissenters are punished, informers encouraged, and people of tender consciences, once promised liberty, are now excommunicated, God be glorified, saith the hypocrite, that we are got rid of them, for now we shall have a glorious church, &c. But the prophet saith, God shall appear to the shame of the persecutors, but to the great joy of those that are persecuted for righteousness sake.

Of the Discouragements to Sufferings.

(1) The inordinate love to this world, and the things of it ; for saith John, If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him : he speaks as an experienced saint, knowing, when the love of the world is uppermost, the love of the Father then cannot be seen or felt.

(2) False reasonings also are great hinderances to sufferings : these made Jonah fly to Tarsus, when he should have gone to Nineveh ; and makes many
now

now fly from their testimonies, when they should give up all to the Lord.

(3) Covetousness, and fear of want in outward things, is another great discouragement: this made Ananias, and his wife, keep back part, when they pretended to give up all.

(4) The predominancy of the affectionate part, sometime in us towards our relations and friends; and sometimes in them towards us: when it is in us to them, it works under pretence of providing for them; because it is written, He is worse than an infidel that provides not for his family: when it is in others towards us, it shews itself under the colour of kindness; as in Peter to his master, when Satan bid him say to him, Save thyself, master. The same Peter, afterward, being under the passion of fear, through the same instigation, openly and foully denied his master.

Lastly, The too much considering of, or looking at, the hardship and greatness of sufferings, is a great discouragement to them; as may be seen in that eminent example of Elijah; his too much heeding, and letting into his mind Jezebel's threats, made this great prophet fly for his life into the wilderness, and there desire that he might die; saying, "For I am not better than my fathers," 1 Kings xix. 4, 5. This was that prophet which vanquished the captains with their fifties, yet flies at the words of a wicked woman; by whose example we may be instructed, what the best of men are, when slavish fear gets over them, and they thereby quit their dependency upon God, and he leaving them to themselves,

*Of the Privileges and Advantages of those that get
rightly through their Sufferings.*

Many and glorious are the privileges and advantages of the true sufferers; although at present it may be grievous, yet afterwards it is joyous; for such understand and know the spiritual baptism of Christ, whereby they are buried with him by baptism, into the death of the first or selfish man, and are risen with him in newness of life in Christ Jesus, the resurrection, and the life.

And they know the New Jerusalem that comes from God out of heaven, with the beautiful attire of the wedding garment, adorned as a bride for her husband, in which John saw no temple: but the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the light of it: and where there is no temple, there is no need of an outward priesthood, neither of any outward or created thing: but is as it was at the dedication of the temple in Solomon's time, when the glory of the Lord filled the house, that the priest could not enter in: neither was there any need of him, while the glory of the Lord took up the room; and yet there were sacrifices abundance, so that there was scarce room to receive them, 2 Chron. vii. 1, 2, &c.

Further, through deep sufferings, comes acquaintance with the spiritual kindred to be witnessed: as Christ said, She is my mother, and she is my sister, and he is my brother, that doth the will of my Father.

This was figured in Joseph's making himself known to his brethren after his sufferings; and Christ our Joseph, after his sufferings, first made himself known to sorrowful Mary; and took special care, that weeping Peter, by name, might be acquainted

quainted with his resurrection. And we read, that it was one great end of his coming into the world, to comfort them that mourn; and to give them beauty for ashes, and the garment of praise, for the spirit of heaviness.

Moreover it is written of him, Heb. ii. 11, 15. That he came to deliver those, who all their lifetime were subject to bondage, through the fear of death. Now you that come through the great tribulations, know what bondage you were in, by fears, and doubts, upon every occasion of sickness, lest you should die in that troubled estate; it was you he came to deliver, and such distressed ones as you that he came to own in the sight of the nation; and to proclaim his relation to such as you, saying, He that sanctifieth, and he that is sanctified, are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; but on the contrary to say unto them, as in effect Joseph did, to the effecting of Pharaoh and his house, though Heathens, I am Joseph your brother, and am not ashamed to call you brethren, even before the monarchs of the earth.

And Christ saith, What I see the Father do, that do I: and thus did his Father deal with him, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, &c. And with Ephraim of old, though a froward child, Not a slave, but a son: and the relation holding, the love continued; for it is written, Having loved his own he loves them to the end.

Which also seems to be figured in the father's answer to the charge against his prodigal son, Luke xv. 30. intended to make the father reject him, urging, that he had spent all upon harlots, and had lived more like a swine than a son; yet being now returned, his father answers all in these words,

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This is my son that was lost, and is found ; this is my son that was dead, and is alive, &c.

And we find it true in ourselves to our children; for by reason of the relation, we are more propense, and ready to do for them, than for others, though naturally wiser, and comelier, and more deserving, than our own ; yet because of the relation, we easily overlook all that.

The scripture frequently useth the similitude of natural relations ; as, If I am a master, where is my fear ? And, If I am a father, where is my honour ? And Matt. vii. 9. " What man is there of you," saith Christ, " whom if his son ask bread, will give him a stone ?" &c. " How much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him ?" And Heb. xii. 9. " If we reverence the fathers of our flesh, when they correct us," &c. how much rather should we submit to the Father of spirits, and live ?

The privilege of sonship, is not only because he abideth in the house for ever ; but also the son knoweth the will of his lord, which the servant doth not.

This was figured in Moses, who is called the meekest man upon earth, yet but a servant over the house ; therefore to speak to the rock to give drink to rebels, Numb. xx. 11. was such a doctrine, that all his meekness was not large enough to receive ; and therefore God was so angry with him and Aaron, that he would not honour them with the conduct of Israel into the promised land, because they believed not God, to sanctify him in the eyes of the people. This is such a doctrine, though abused by the libertines, as the Father only imparts to his children in their deep exercises and trials, which then melts, and breaks their hearts ;

as

as Peter's was, when Christ looked upon him after his great transgression.

Furthermore, through deep sufferings, proud flesh is put to silence by God himself; as it was in Job, before he could heartily forgive the injuries of his friends; and then he can pray for them, and repent in dust and ashes, renouncing all dependencies upon any thing, but the Lord God alone.

Whom now in his deep humiliation he comes to know, and see, for himself; and abhorring himself, he now repents. "Then the Lord" (not before) "turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends," Job xlii. 10. for he that will help up one that is fallen must stoop himself.

Some poor mourners in Zion refuse to be comforted, because deep exercises are their constant companions, notwithstanding they never were debauched in their conversations, but have been religiously inclined from their tender years, while they observe many to be strangers to their complaints.

And when they have searched, to find out the particular cause of their afflictions, the certainty of it hath been hid from them; so that they are ready to question, even when a little hope doth appear, whether they should receive it or no; as Gideon did the angel's message, when he replied to him, Why am I thus?

I would have such consider, that there is no particular cause certainly assigned in scripture, of the great and deep sufferings of Job, that I remember, it may be to instruct us, that we should not judge the eternal estate of the soul, because of deep exercises within; neither from the outward afflictions upon the body; and also to inform us, that the great God will crown integrity and uprightness in
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the hearts of his people, in defiance of Satan and his wiles.

Therefore the apostle hath recorded it, James v. 11. saying, " You have heard of the patience of Job," yet in his extremity he spake advisedly, " and have seen the end of the Lord, that the Lord " is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

But faith the exercised ones, I fear miscarrying at last, seeing stronger than I have been turned aside, &c. What although many, that have been strong to draw the bow, do turn their backs in the day of battle, and depart from the faith they once professed? Yet a better people shall be raised up in the room of them, that shall abide with the faithful, and reap in joy, amongst those that have sown in tears; and went weeping, bearing precious seed, &c. Psalm cxxvi. which like Joseph's, after the famine, shall produce years of plenty; causing the earth to be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

The Conclusion.

The beloved John, the divine, saw the state of those that came through the great and last tribulations, which now hastens apace, to be, for glory and brightness, like unto transparent glass; not only because they are so within, but also because all things (without) were made so unto them, that they saw through riches, and honour, through sufferings, and death itself; as plainly as when a man looks through transparent glass, that is clear as crystal.

And to perpetuate their glory, he saith, And there shall be no more sea, or trouble, because

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there

there is no time for it; for time itself shall be no more, the Amen being come, that puts an end to it: and he reigning that lives for ever and ever; and they that suffered with him, and for him, sitting upon spiritual thrones, and reigning also; for because he lives, they shall live in their Master's joy, where they shall sing the new song, which none can learn, but the redeemed out of the earth.

Written about 1683.

J. CROOK

AN

A N
E P I S T L E

T O

Young People professing the Truth.

Dear Friends,

KNOWING that many which fear the Lord, and think upon his name, have had, for some time, a concern upon their minds for the declining conditions of many young people that are amongst us; saying often one to another, What will become of the next generation, considering the youth of this are so degenerated from those that received the truth at the beginning? Whereupon it came into my heart, according to the examples of Christ, and his apostles, who to rectify abuses in marriage, and other things, saith, But it was not so from the beginning; intimating, that the best way to amend things amiss, is to bring people to the beginning; that as they received Christ Jesus the Lord, so to walk in him; which is the drift and end of this epistle to young people, and others professing the truth.

Many are yet alive, who from their own knowledge can testify the humility, mortification, and self-denial of the youth at the beginning, together with their contempt of all youthful vanities, &c.

their words few and savoury, their countenances grave and serious, in their places diligent and faithful; being examples of temperance and sobriety to neighbours and acquaintance; in the worship and service of God attentive and watchful; carefully improving all opportunities to increase their communion and acquaintance with God, in Christ Jesus the Light. All which were as blessed signs of those times of refreshment from God's presence, that the souls of the faithful were then made partakers of.

Let children inquire of their parents, that were eye-witnesses from the beginning, and they can tell them; let servants ask their faithful masters, and they can inform them, what manner of people the younger sort of Quakers, so called, were at the beginning: nay, there were few such strangers in the places where the truth first took place, but they could declare these things. By all which, as in a glass, many now, professing the same truth, may see themselves bearing another image: therefore ought diligently to make inquiry, what is the cause, and whence the disparity ariseth; for if the gospel at the beginning proved itself to be preached again, by the fore-mentioned, and many more blessed effects upon all those that received the truth in the love of it; What is the matter? Is not the gospel an everlasting gospel, and Christ the way, the truth, and the life, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? And doth not his works still, in the hearts of the called, chosen, and faithful, bear witness of him?

Therefore, it is to be feared, those that are thus fallen, have received another gospel, or the gospel perverted, or turned upside down, as the apostle speaks; seeing those at the beginning, began in the spirit; but since that, many that began well,

think

think to be made perfect by the flesh, where too many hold the truth in unrighteousness. But my design is, not to accuse, but to inform those that are out of the way, if possible they may be reclaimed, before the evil day overtake them.

I know some of the younger are ready to blame the elder, and some children their parents, and some servants their masters examples: to all which I say, That such as are guilty thereof shall bear their own burden, and shall not escape the righteous judgment of God: but you, that make this plea, know, That the soul that sins shall die; and the witness of God in your consciences, if hearkened unto, will convince you of the vanity of this fig-leaf covering, and the deceitfulness of your own hearts, in thinking that the evil example of others will be an excuse for your backsliding.

For those that in their youth received the truth at the beginning, were surrounded with evil examples on every hand; so that if examples could have prevailed to continue them in worldly vanities, they could never have broken through those oppositions from acquaintance and nearest relations; for if they had looked outward, all hopes of preferment in this world were wholly gone; and looking inward, there appeared such strong holds of Satan, as seemed impossible ever to be overcome; the truth itself being such a stranger in the earth, that almost every body was backward to give it entertainment, especially if they had any thing in this world to lose for harbouring of it.

Whereas the youth and others of later times found the truth both ready proved, and successively defended, against the subtil arguments and wits of those professing times, in which it at first broke forth; and that not by the might and power of wit, or outward learning, but by simplicity

and godly sincerity, accompanied with holiness of life and conversation; which was a great confirmation to the first publishing of it: together with the meek and patient, yet bold and valiant suffering the loss of all for the truth, as it is in Jesus; by which, in a great measure, the rough way was worn smooth, and the passage made much more easy to those that followed, than it was at the beginning: for those that were as gazing-stocks at the beginning, of latter times came to be well known; and that estrangedness to persons and principles came to vanish away, and a good esteem of the truth, and of those that professed it, sprang up in divers persons: so mightily grew the word of God, and prospered at the beginning.

But alas, of latter times, the wild boar of the forest hath got into the vineyard, and rooted up many hopeful plants; and others are fallen into the world's customs, ways and fashions, who are become as spots in the true Christian assemblies, and blemishes to the truth, as it was at the beginning; as if the sins of Sodom, which were pride, carelessness, excess, and contempt of the poor, were become the virtues of Zion: Many young people, and others, getting into those things again, which their parents, relations, and acquaintance, for good conscience sake, were forced to lay aside; as if in these latter times the efficacy of truth was not the same as at the beginning; and as if the cross of Christ, that was so powerful then was now become of none effect.

Little doth the wanton youth of this age think what sighs and tears their godly parents, and friends that love them, pour out in secret for them, both because of their eternal estates hereafter, and the dishonour they bring here unto the blessed name and truth of God; whereby it is become a saying
amongst

amongst ancient people, That the Quakers now-a-days are not like those at the beginning.

What watchfulness, what carefulness, what diligence therefore ought every one to use, lest by bad company and examples, they should be ensnared before they are aware, and so by degrees be drawn to such inconveniences, as afterward they will find very hard to withstand; until they are brought to that degree of stupidity, and hardness of heart, that all exhortations unto virtue and godliness find so little entertainment, that even strangers in our meetings are more serious, and tenderness of heart sooner procured in them, than in many who have frequented our assemblies from their childhood unto men and women's estates, so evil and catching are the bad examples of others to them whose hearts are not kept tender to God.

Be serious therefore, all you that make profession of the truth, in your tender years, and examine yourselves, how you came to make profession of it: was it by some by-ends, and sinister respects? Or was it by education from your parents, or others, only? Not regarding the good intention and end thereof, so as to come to the root of the matter in yourselves, nor heeding to be guided by the light in your own consciences; but from time to time feeding only upon good words from others, &c. as it is to be feared too too many do at this day: I say unto all such careless ones, I pity your condition; for all your goodness will prove like the morning dew, that soon vanisheth when heat ariseth; and your profession will wither, like the corn upon the house top: therefore let the time past suffice, that you have spent your precious time to no purpose, and rest no longer in an easeful mind, above the cross; but sink down in deep humility to the oppressed seed of God in

you, which he hath left as a witness for himself, that you might not be as Sodom, and like unto Gomorrah, if you diligently hearken to it in your own particulars.

Parents and others, that fear the Lord, are bound in duty to God, to use all means they can to impress the tender minds of their children and youth with the sense of God's power; and in so doing they shall not lose their reward from God, although their children, when grown up, turn their backs upon it: for parents, at the beginning, looked upon the truth as the best portion for their children; not so much heeding their preferment in this world, if by any means they might have an interest in that which is to come: and in order thereunto, they counselled their children to mind the inward and spiritual grace, that so they might not rely upon any outward and visible thing for preservation and defence; because that inward and spiritual grace was commended to us at the beginning, as the best teacher, to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live godly, righteously, and soberly in this present world: but if young people will reject the good advice of their parents and others, and degenerate from their education, their destruction will be of themselves; and their poor grieving parents, and others, can but mourn in secret for them.

Children and others ought to know, that there is no standing at a stay, or stop in religion; for not to go forward therein, is to go backward: hence it is that the scripture saith, Heb. vi. "It is impossible
 " for those who were once enlightened, and have
 " tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers
 " of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good
 " word of God, and the powers of the world to
 " come, if they shall fall away, to renew them
 " again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to
 " themselves

“ themselves the Son of God afresh, and put “ him to open shame:” and being a business of greatest importance, the apostle urgeth it from the similitude following; For, saith he, The earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whom it is dressed, receiveth blessings from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars, is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt.

If there be therefore any consolation in Christ the truth, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels of mercies, you that live carelessly and wantonly upon the earth, consider your conditions, and examine yourselves, how far the fore-mentioned scripture affects you; for I have a deep concern upon my heart for you all, that have forsaken your first love, and bear another image, than those young people I have mentioned at the beginning.

Suppose by your conformity to the vanities of this present world, you should gain a large share therein, which but few obtain; what will it avail when terrifying death looks you in the face? Have you forgotten Moses’s choice, who esteemed it greater riches to suffer afflictions with the people of God, than to be related to the court of a great monarch? What shall I say to prevail with you? Is it not great pity, that any who in years past bore the frowns of the great ones of the earth patiently, went through reproaches cheerfully, and many hardships constantly, for some time, and doubtless such felt a reward from God for their encouragement? Why then should you lose your crown at last?

Come, let us reason together, and let God’s witness speak: Wanted you any thing, while you kept your integrity? Did you not witness one day in God’s presence, better than all the delights that
ever

ever you had, since your minds by looseness and vanities have been estranged from him? Did your pleasures and companions in folly ever afford you that comfort, and inward contentment and peace, which sometimes you have felt amongst God's people? Why then do you deprive yourselves, by your negligence, of that sweetness and comfort, which no created enjoyment can recompense the loss of, besides that farther hope of glory that is laid up for those that walk uprightly?

Many of the youthful people, and others amongst us, need not say, What is truth? Because I know it hath often proved itself to their consciences, beyond all outward demonstration; and they cannot be ignorant how divers that have backsliden have been followed with a secret hand against them, in all they have gone about.

Come away therefore, and tarry no longer in lying vanities; and let none say, they cannot leave them; for that is the language of your soul's enemy to discourage you: wherefore resist him stedfastly in the faith, and he will fly from you; for he hath no power, but in darkness and unbelief: watch therefore to the light of Christ Jesus, that discovers all the twistings of that crooked serpent, and take up the daily cross to those evils that so easily beset you; and you will find, as you have often heard, the armour of light at hand to defend you against all your youthful lusts: as, blessed be God, there are yet a cloud of witnesses alive, that can, from good experience, testify the same,

POSTSCRIPT,

P O S T S C R I P T.

LET none despise these lines for their plainness; for we were a plain people at the beginning. I know some of the younger sort are apt to be taken with fine words, and fashionable language, as with other things in fashion; but experience shews, that that which tickles the outward ear, commonly stops there, very seldom coming so low as to the truth in the inward parts: therefore this epistle is sent abroad in so plain a dress, on purpose, answerable to a plain seed in them that are puffed up, but ought rather to have mourned; which seed being reached, and their souls relieved, my end is answered,

Luton, the 16th of the
6th month, 1686.

JOHN CROOK,

THE

T H E
WAY TO A LASTING PEACE,
AND
TRUE RECONCILIATION.

IT may be said, by way of allusion to the prophet's words, *Isaiah ix. 5, &c.* That after the outward war of confused noise, and garments rolled in blood, is at an end, there must be another war or battle, of which the prophet saith, *This shall be with burning and fuel of fire, &c.* That as the former war killed mens bodies, this latter may destroy mens corruptions and lusts, from whence all outward wars and fightings commonly proceed.

That this may be effected in all, from the highest to the lowest, there must be a diligent watch kept, by every one, over their own hearts and ways, unto the convictions, motions, and strivings, of the holy Spirit within; through the neglect and want of which, the flood came upon the old world; and it was said, *God's Spirit shall not always strive with man; but after his long suffering and patience, he swept them all away, except those few in the ark.*

And Christ saith, *Matt. xxiv. 37, 38, 39. viz.*
“As the days of Noah were, so shall also the coming
“of the Son of man be: for as in the days that
“were before the flood, they were eating and drink-
“ing.”

“ing,” &c. “until the day that Noah entered into
“the ark, and knew not until the flood came,”
&c.

There were these two things in the days of Noah observable, viz. an ark and a flood; an ark to preserve the faithful, and a flood to destroy the careless and ungodly.

Therefore those that expect a perpetual and lasting peace, must leave their wantonness and mocking, as those Atheists did, the apostle speaks of, 2 Pet. iii. 3, 4, 9. “Because all things seemed to
“them, to continue as they were from the creation,”
&c. “But the Lord,” saith the apostle, “is not
“slack concerning his promise, as some men count
“slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward; not
“willing that any should perish, but that all
“should come to repentance: but the day of the
“Lord,” saith he, “will come as a thief in the
“night.” Therefore let all fear the great God,
and forsake the evil of their doings; and be like
that good man Noah, who, being moved with fear,
built an ark for the preservation of himself and his
family.

Are not the coffers of princes emptied, and the riches of the people much exhausted? But is not pride, covetousness, luxury, and wantonness increased and abounding? Which the prophet’s burning and fire, spoken of before, must consume, and they be forsaken, before a perpetual and lasting peace be established: and that government that makes the nations happy, must be upon his shoulders, that the same prophet mentions to be borne and given, in his very next words, after the war and battle, with burning and fuel of fire, saying, For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders.

Come

Come therefore unto the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Prince of Peace, and Lord of Glory, whose right it is to reign spiritually over all crowned heads, and over all their subjects: if you would, in good earnest, enjoy a firm and lasting peace; for, "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked," Isaiah lvii. 21.

Come to him, all you that call yourselves Catholics, and learn of him universal love and good will towards all those you count your enemies, and cease persecuting of them for their consciences to God, over which he only ought to rule, if you would enjoy a firm and lasting peace. And come all you, called Protestants and Nonconformists of all sorts, and protest by your practice, against all ungodliness and nonconformity to the divine will and commandments of the Almighty; rest not in the name, but manifest yourselves to be transformed in the renewedness of your hearts, by bringing forth the fruits of a real protestation against all manner of wickedness which abounds among you, to the contempt of true religion and holy conversation, if you expect a firm and lasting peace.

For the end of the bloody or lion's war, must be the beginning of the Lamb's, who shall have the victory, not by garments rolled in blood, for he wars not to destroy mens lives, but their corruptions and lusts, and to save their souls: his beginning is said to be, "With one crown upon his head, and a bow in his hand," Rev. vi. 2. but the work of the Lord shall so prosper in his hand, that the revelation of Jesus Christ, to his servant John, tells us, "That on his head were many crowns," at last, Rev. xix. 12.

For when his name comes to be universally known, by reading it written upon his vesture, and upon his thigh, viz. that great and glorious
name

name of King of kings, and Lord of lords; then all crowns shall be laid down as it were at his feet, and of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end; for the stability of his times, shall be righteousness and peace.

When this comes to be fulfilled, times will be settled in good earnest, and there will be no doubt of a firm, lasting, and perpetual peace: for the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, &c. And there shall be no destroyer in all God's holy mountain, &c.

And although my gray hairs may not be privileged from the grave until these things be accomplished, yet I shall lay down my head, in hopes, that some may be now alive, who may more fully see the fulfilling of them.

For who knows but the King of kings may send forth his ambassadors of peace to the nations yet afar off? And that such may be prevalent, in the Spirit and power of Jesus Christ, to awaken the nations to a true reconciliation with God, that they also may be partakers of a saving and lasting peace, through Jesus Christ?

And who knows but these overturnings of governors and governments, and the bowing of great potentates, in making them willing to yield up their late conquests, and some to confess to that which formerly they would not acknowledge, may make way for Christ's peaceable government?

And who knows, but the same God, in the day of his power, may bow many strong-willed and stout-hearted ones of the world, to give and yield up the old power, that wickedness of all sorts hath so long had over them, unto him that is called, The desire of all nations, whose coming is foretold, as the effect of all those shakings and overturnings that shall be in the world, that God, and
his

his Christ alone, whose kingdom cannot be shaken, may remain, the firm peace, and everlasting rest, for the people of God.

But know this, that now there is no whole and intire nation that is the people of God, but they only that fear God, and work righteousness, in every nation, are accepted of him.

Come therefore, all you princes of this world, and purge yourselves and courts from all unrighteousness, and follow the example of that holy king David, who promised, That when he was restored to his kingdom, he would not suffer a liar to be in his house. Come also, all you nobles, and purge your families from the workers of iniquity; and all you people that profess Christianity, by the power of Christ, purge your consciences from all dead works, and learn truly to serve the living God.

And come all you that rejoice in the glad-tidings of peace in your native countries, and learn sobriety and moderation in all things, that there may be rejoicing in heaven also at your conversion from the evil of your doings, that you may offer to God, by Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, by killing your lusts and corruptions; for as in the outward sacrifices there was something to be killed, so must wickedness be slain, before you can truly keep a day of thanksgiving unto God: when this is practised, then may we all expect a ratification from heaven, of a true and perpetual peace.

But if unfeigned repentance be wanting, your joy will be turned into mourning; and instead of days of rejoicing, The great day of the Lord will come upon you, that shall burn as an oven, and all that are proud, and all that do wickedly, shall be
as

as stubble, and he will leave them neither root nor branch.

Therefore be serious, and repent of your former mis-spent time, and reform from the highest to the lowest, both great and small; then may you expect a firm and lasting peace, that every one may sit under his own vine, and under his own fig-tree, praising the God of peace, and loving one another, even your neighbours as yourselves.

Hertford, the 1st of the
8th month, 1697.

JOHN CROOK.

A a

TO

(T O)
F R I E N D S

O F

SEWEL'S *Meeting, Bedfordshire.*

Dear Friends,

HAVING this opportunity, I was willing to signify my remembrance of you, amongst whom I was conversant in my young years, and now am old; yet I can say, in all that I have seen, I never saw the righteous forsaken; and therefore these lines are to encourage you all, to be faithful to the light of Christ Jesus, in your hearts and consciences, for that is the true grace of God, in which the faithful do stand, and shall stand to the end, notwithstanding all discouragements either from enemies in your own bosoms, or from without; notwithstanding the wicked one's rage, who goes about every way to discourage and hinder, both the prosperity of truth within, and without also; yet the truth in which you have believed shall prosper; and you that are faithful to it, shall hold out to the end. Therefore love the truth nevertheless, but rather the more, because it is rejected of men; but it is that which God hath chosen, to exalt his name in the whole world in his due time, and at present doth exalt it in the faithful. It is now near forty-four years, since first myself, and, it may be, some others, that are yet alive in the body among you, heard the joyful sound of truth; since which time we have seen the wonders of the Lord, in preserving
both

both the truth, and the faithful in it, blessed be our Preserver for ever.

My exhortation to you all is, To love the truth, and one another in it, for it is the best portion you can have in this world; therefore do your utmost to make it the portion of your children after you; for godliness hath the promise of this life, and that which is to come: and, I beseech you, refuse not the chastenings of the Lord; for I can tell you, by good and long experience, that afflictions are God's furnace, in which he refines his people as gold; then they can tell of his doings, and that they are miraculous in their eyes, as my soul can do this day, as a man that hath been afflicted from my youth up; and now in my old age, being eighty years, in all which the Lord hath tried me, but never forsaken me; but often instructed me in his secrets, and confirmed me in his truth, and given me the benefit of that counsel which I have given to you and others; so that I have found the virtue of those exhortations to be a comfort to me in my greatest extremities, to my unspeakable satisfaction and joy.

This I speak, not to boast, but to confirm you in the truth, that we may all persevere unto the end, and finish our course with joy, in despite of all opposition whatsoever. And this shall you do, that are faithful to the light of Christ Jesus in your own particulars; for that must be watched unto, and waited in, unto the end; that the light, as it comes from Christ, so it leads to Christ, and exalts the Father, through the Spirit, who is God over all, blessed for ever. Amen.

JOHN CROOK.

Hertford, the 3d of the
3d month, 1698.

A a 2

TRUTH'S

and the other side of the river is the old town of St. Louis, Mo.

1941

TRUTH'S PRINCIPLES:

OR, THOSE THINGS ABOUT

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP,

WHICH ARE MOST SURELY BELIEVED AND RECEIVED
AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF GOD, CALLED

Q U A K E R S,

V I Z.

Concerning the Man CHRIST, his Sufferings, Death,
Resurrection, Faith in his Blood, Imputation
of his Righteousness, Sanctification, Justifica-
tion, &c.

Written to stop the Mouth of Clamour, and to
Inform all who desire to know the Truth, as it
is in Jesus, by the Servant of the Lord,

JOHN CROOK.

L O N D O N:

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THE PRINCIPLES

OF THE TRUTH ABOUT

DOCTRINE AND WORSHIP

WHICH ARE MOST SUITABLY BELIEVED AND RECEIVED
AMONGST THE PEOPLE OF GOD, CALLED

QUAKERS

1715

Concerning the blessed Christ, his suffering, Death,
Resurrection, and his Blood, Injunction
of his Righteousness, Sanctification, Judgment
and Life.

Written to Hop the Ministry of Quakers, and to
Inform all who desire to know the Truth, as it
is held by the Ministry of the Lord.

JOHN CROFT

LONDON

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JAMES WILKINS, GEORGE
ALLEN, AND STEPHEN

TO THE
R E A D E R.

IT being allowed by some late adversaries, that we are more sound in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, than they thought of; yet they persist to object, that we have altered our religion, and that our ancient Friends held grievous errors: I am therefore willing in the 81st year of my age, that this following Treatise should be re-printed, that they may see what myself, with our ancient Friends, held in the year 1663.

Hertford, the 10th of the
10th month, 1698.

JOHN CROOK.

TRUTH'S PRINCIPLES.

MANY are the reports that are abroad concerning this people, not only as to their practices and deportments, but also as to their doctrines and belief. The former, time having in a great measure resolved and worn it out, as being the refuge of lies for the ignorant and unrighteous to flee unto; for that stormy and wintry appearance is well nigh over and gone, because the sun is so far risen, and the true light so shineth, that most begin to see, that those reports were but

lies and scandals, raised as fig-leaves to cover the nakedness of other professions, that begun so manifestly to appear, through the light that shined in these peoples lives and conversations. But though the first be gone, yet the latter still sticks with many, as not knowing what they hold, as to doctrine; some saying, They deny the scriptures, and the resurrection of the body, and all ordinances, with the Man Christ, and his death and sufferings, and imputation of his righteousness, and faith in his blood, &c. Wherefore, for the satisfaction of all that would willingly be received, and know the truth, as it is in Jesus, I have written this short account of their faith and belief; and if it were possible, to stop the mouths of clamourous tongues, before sentence be given against them, by some signal stroke of the Lord from heaven; which he will undoubtedly in his appointed time, reveal and make manifest, to the trembling of all hearts concerned therein, and tingling of all ears that shall hear thereof; when it shall be said unto them, "The holy shall be holy still, and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still," Rev. xxii. 11.

We believe, that the God of all grace, hath given a measure of grace, or some manifestation of his Spirit, and light thereof, unto all men; according unto these scriptures, John i. 9. Titus ii. 11. 1 Cor. xii. 7. Neh. ix. 20. and experiences of all men, who, at some time or other, do feel something in their hearts and consciences, that doth lust against the flesh, and the flesh against it: and that these two are contrary the one to the other; one lusting after evil, which is evil; the other after good, which is good; the one carnal, the other spiritual; the one from the earth, the other from heaven, Gal. v. 16, 17.

We

We believe, By this gift, grace, and inspiration of the Almighty, man only can come to know the true God truly; what he is, and how he works in the hearts and consciences of people, to regenerate them, and make them bear his image; according unto 1 Cor. i. 19, 20, 21. Luke x. 21. and experiences of all that ever were regenerate and born again.

We believe, That all the errors and mistakes about God, and the things relating to his kingdom, sprang and arose from mens wandering from this gift of God, into their own imaginations; whereby, though they thought themselves wise, yet they became fools, and erred, their foolish hearts being darkened, according to Rom. i. not knowing the " scriptures, nor the power of God;" as it is written, Matt. xxii. 29.

We believe and know, That this gift and grace of God appears in and unto all men, that all may be without excuse, accusing for the evil, and excusing for the good, according to Rom. ii. 15, 16. shewing unto man what is good, and reproving of him in his own conscience for the evil, whether thoughts, words, or deeds; and that this " reproof of instruction is the way of life," Prov. vi. 23.

We believe, That as the true God, and eternal life, is known only by the light of this gift and grace, according unto the scriptures; from which light and Spirit of God came the scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, as it is written, 2 Pet. i. 21. So can they only be read, as truly to be believed, fulfilled, and practised, in the light and power of the same; and all that are out of this spirit, must needs be ignorant and unlearned, in the apostle's sense, who wrest the scriptures to their own destruction, as it is written: for Peter and John were unlearned men outwardly, not knowing letters,

letters, but inwardly read in the knowledge of this light and Spirit of God, and wrested not the scriptures, Acts iv. 13. 2 Pet. 3. 16.

We believe, according to the scriptures, 2 Cor. iv. 3. That wheresoever the power of God is not known within, there the gospel is hid, and unknown unto them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, and God should heal them; because it is only by the light of Christ, the power of God, that the creature comes truly to see himself in his lost and undone state; from which sight ariseth a true sense in the heart of the creature, that makes him cry out of his wretchedness, by reason of the body of sin and death, which necessitates him to look out for a Saviour, whom God manifesteth in and by the same light, that shines in the heart, on purpose to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, God's image, whereby God healeth the soul: and therefore doth the devil, the god of the world, strive so much by the gifts of the pleasures, profits, vanities, and lusts that are in the world, which he presenteth to men and women now, as he did to Christ, in the days of his flesh, when he shewed to him all the world, with its glory; which glory is, The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; whatever may make this life happy, as it were, in the things that may pride it, or lift it up to sit as queen: and as men and women take and receive these gifts from the god of this world, their minds are blinded, because they believe not in the light, which sheweth them the vanities of all the gifts of the god of this world; which gifts, the devil knows, if they be received, will so blind the minds of them
that

that receive them, that they will not come to be sensible in the true light of their lost conditions, so as to cry unto God from the deep and true sense; for then God, out of the depths of his love and mercy, could not but heal them: and therefore, lest the true light should shine into them, to give them the sensible knowledge of themselves, and God should heal them, the devil, as god of the world, by the things of the world, endeavours to blind the mind, not the brain-knowledge, but the heart-feeling sense within, in the mind, lest the light within should so shine, as God should heal them; and all the bufflings of Satan, with his gifts, are but to blind the mind within, lest God should heal the soul, that complains to him, from the true sight and sense of his misery, as in himself.

By this grace and gift within, we believe, That to us, though in the world there be lords many, and gods many, there is but one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, witnessed within man, only by the spirit of truth, that manifests both the Father and the son; and these three are one, and agree in one; and he that honours the Father, honours the Son that proceeds from him; and he that denies the Spirit, denies both the Father and the Son, and is Antichrist; but he that believes in the Spirit, and is led by it, is the son of God; Rom. viii. 14. "As many as are the sons of God, are led by the Spirit of God."

We believe, The scriptures bear witness unto, and testify of Christ; but they say, The witness of God is greater than them; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God: for it is not the scriptures without the Spirit, nor the Spirit contrary to the scriptures; but the Spirit's discovering the will of God in the heart, or opening of the scriptures in its own time and way,
and

and not in or by the will of man, but as itself pleaseth, who searcheth all things, even the deep things of God, and manifests them unto the soul, which giveth the perfect, sound, and saving knowledge: for, said Christ, The Spirit shall take of mine, and shew them unto you: and as holy men gave forth the scriptures, 2 Pet. i. 21. so holy men, and they only, come truly to understand them; and not proud or ungodly, because their hearts and lives do not answer the hearts and lives of those that gave them forth, as face answereth face in a glass. And this we believe to be the reason, why so long preaching, by men of corrupt minds, who have and do handle the words deceitfully, for selfish ends, and filthy lucre sake, hath brought forth so little fruit, and been to so little purpose, except to their purses and bellies; for "had they believed, and therefore spoken, and stood in God's counsel, they should have profited their hearers," Jer. xxiii. 21, 22, 23, to the end.

Through this gift we believe, That Christ Jesus, the Son of God, was manifested in the flesh, in the fulness of time. And this we know by the same spirit, by which our fathers believed he was come, and Abraham saw his day; by the same we do believe he is come, and do see his day; as also by the prophets and apostles writings: which two-fold cord is not easily broken.

We believe also, according to the scriptures of truth, That this same Jesus hath God highly exalted, and given him a name above every name, that whosoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life; and that there is not another name, whereby man can be saved, than this name of Jesus Christ; nor is remission of sins to be preached by any other name. But as we do not believe, that the outward letters and syllables are
that

that name, that are to be bowed unto by the outward knee, no more than the letters or syllables in the words, God, or Spirit, seeing the scripture saith, "Unto God, who is a Spirit, every knee shall bow," Isa. xlv. 23. But that name which saves, is the power and arm of God, that brings salvation from sin, and makes every soul that names it, to depart from iniquity. This is that name which was preached, and which is preached, through faith; in which name, remission of sins is obtained: therefore was the outward word Jesus given him, as his outward name; Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins: (mark) for he shall save, &c. So that which saves, is the name, which is to be believed in, which is that arm of God that brings salvation, when no eye pities, neither is there any to help; the power of God that then saves, is that grace that comes from the fulness of Christ the Saviour: and without this virtue, Christ and Jesus are but empty names, 1 Cor. xii. 3. "No man can say, that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."

We believe also, That this Jesus died for, or because of sin, and rose again for the justification of those that believe in him, as well as to manifest to all the world, that he was the Son of God, and that he thereby spoiled principalities and powers, and triumphed over them openly, and led captivity captive in his own person; yet we believe and know, by his grace in our hearts, that as his name Jesus, without virtue and power, is but an empty word; so his dying, without man's conformity to his death, or being planted in the likeness thereof, or being crucified with Christ, as saith the scripture, Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Gal. ii. 20. will not profit man, as to the salvation of his soul, no more than the naming of his outward name
Jesus

Jefus doth at this day make people to depart from iniquity. For we believe, and are fure, that man muft die inwardly, as well as Chrift died outwardly, and muft be put to death in his flefh, as Chrift was, in his : for “ he that is in the flefh, cannot “ pleafe God,” Rom. viii. 8. “ neither ceafe from “ fin ;” but “ he that is dead, is freed from fin,” Rom. vi. 7. And yet man’s dying unto fin, and the root and principle of it in himfelf, is fo far from making void Chrift’s death in his own perfon, that it eftablifheth it to all thofe ends and purpofes, for which it was intended of the Father. As the cures which the phyfician doth, manifft and eftablifh his fkill and ability ; fo doth man’s dying unto fin and felf, and living unto God, manifft and eftablifh the virtue and power of Chrift’s death : for as man maniffts his being rifen with Chrift, by his seeking the things that are above, Col. iii. 1, 2. fo doth he manifft his knowledge of the death of Chrift, by his being crucified with Chrift, and bearing about in his body, the dyings of the Lord Jefus ; for as it is not an outward belief, gathered from the letter, that will change the heart and life, though the judgment and opinion it may, fo is it not a belief from the hiftory, or letter only, that can give man a faving knowledge of the death of Chrift ; but he muft have the fame glory and power of the Father in meafure, working in him there, to beget faith in his heart, that he may believe unto falvation from his own filthinefs and righteoufnefs, as well as confefs with his mouth, Rom. x. and muft have that fpirit in him, quickening his mortal body, as well as to believe that it was in Chrift, “ and raifed up him from the dead,” Rom. viii. 11. And this man, whoever he be, bond or free, that thus believes the death of Chrift, and its fatisfaction to God, as well as its ufefulness to man, cannot

cannot make it void, nor divide it and its virtue upon the soul that thus knows it: but will say, here is a dying man witnessing the death of Christ, and nevertheless the same man living with Christ, and concluding, if Christ had not died, man must have perished in his sin; this being the way found out by God to recover him; whereby he knows Christ, and him crucified, and what the preaching of the cross of Christ is, which is foolishness to them that perish, but to them that are saved, the wisdom of God, and the power of God, 1 Cor. i. 18.

By this gift of God in our hearts, we further believe, That Christ Jesus rose again from the dead, according unto the scriptures, and sits at God's right hand in a glorious body; and we believe that our low estates and humbled bodies, shall be made like unto his glorious body, through the working of his mighty power, whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself; and that this mortal shall put on immortality. For though we believe, that Christ Jesus hath lighted every man with his light, whereby man may come to know himself lost and undone, as before is said; yet therefore is not every man saved, though the grace that appears to all men is sufficient in itself; but some have the grace of God bestowed on them in vain, not liking to retain God in their knowledge, though something within them shews them what is good; "but they reject the counsel of God within, or against themselves, to their own destruction," Luke vii. 30. (see the margin) And yet it doth not follow, that the grace is insufficient itself, no more than it follows that Christ's death is insufficient, because he tasted death for every man, and yet every man is not saved. Neither doth regeneration, or the believing in the light of Christ within, make void the death and sufferings of Christ without at Jerusalem, no more than

than believing the scripture-testimony without, concerning Christ's death, makes void the work of regeneration and mortification within; but as the apostle saith in another case, so say I in this, For as the man is not without the woman, neither is the woman without the man in the Lord; even so is not the death and sufferings of Christ without at Jerusalem, to be made void and of none effect by any thing within; neither doth the light within make that of none effect without, but both in the Lord answer his will: for though there is, and may be, a knowledge and belief of what Christ did and suffered without the gates, in his own body upon the tree, and yet sin alive in the heart, and the work of regeneration not known; yet it cannot be so, where the light within is believed on, and obeyed, so as to have its perfect work in the heart, to regenerate and make all things new, and to be of God; this man can never make void what Christ hath done and suffered without: and yet this new birth, or Christ formed within, and dwelling in the heart by faith, doth not limit or confine Christ to be only within, and not without also, but both within and without, according to the good pleasure of the Father, to reveal and make him known; for, "He fills all things, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him," and yet is he at God's right hand, far above all heavens, in a glorious body.

And we also believe the resurrection of the just and unjust, the one to salvation, and the other to condemnation, according unto the judgment of the great day; and then shall every seed have its own body, according to 1 Cor. xv. 36, 37, 38. which we verily believe: for if the dead arise not, we are, of all men, most miserable. But because we dare not be so foolishly inquisitive, as to say, With what bodies shall they arise? Therefore do some say, We deny both the resurrection of the body of Christ, and
of

of all that shall or will be dead : but this also is false ; for “ every man shall be raised in his own “ order ; but Christ the first fruits,” 1 Cor. xv. 23. And we believe, they shall be raised with the same bodies, so far as a natural and spiritual, corruptible and incorruptible, terrestrial and celestial, can be the same.

We further believe, according unto the scriptures, concerning faith, That that faith is only true, which is God’s gift, and hath Christ Jesus, the power of God, for its author and object, and is distinguished from the dead faith, by its fruits : for though in description and definition they may carry a resemblance, yet in nature are as different as a living man is from a dead, which wants not form or shape, but life and power. So faith the apostle James, “ As the body without a spirit is “ dead, so is faith without works ;” even so is that faith which stands in the wisdom of words, and not in the power of God : by the one, man is kept in captivity to the world, and the things of it ; but by the other he hath “ victory over the world,” 1 John v. 4. and the seal and witness thereof in his own heart, whereby it is purified, and God is seen ; for the pure in heart see God,” Matt. v. 8. This faith differs men now, and their worships, as as it did Cain and Abel ; for, “ by faith Abel offered up a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,” Heb. xi. By this living faith, Abel saw beyond the sacrifice unto Christ, the first-born of God ; beyond the firstling of the flock, which he offered ; and therefore God had respect unto Abel and his offering ; but God rejected Cain and his offering, though he had faith to believe it to be his duty, yet sticking in the form, and not flying on the wing of faith unto Christ the one offering he missed the mark, as all have done ever since, that have

gone in Cain's way of worshipping, as well as killing men about worship. But we believe that faith to be only true and saving, that flies over self-righteousness, as well as filthiness, unto the fountain of life in Christ; which faith hath nothing of man in it, but is as the breath of life, by which the soul lives; not a bare assent to the truth of a proposition in the natural understanding, but the soul's cleaving unto God, out of a naturalness between Christ and the soul; and so lives rather by relation, than bare credit, or desperate adventure and hazard; not looking at its doing to commend it, but God's love and bounty in Christ the sight, to receive it; and yet holiness is its delight, and he can no more live out of it, than the fish upon the dry land.

We believe, That this faith keeps the mind pure, the heart clean, through the sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience, by the blood of Jesus, which remits the sin, and justifies the soul, through the virtue of this blood received into the heart by this living faith, which receives all its power and virtue from Christ, in whom it abides as its root and object, whereby justification is witnessed "from sin, not in sin," Rom. vi. 22. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants unto God, you have your fruits unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

We believe, That justification and sanctification are distinguished, but not divided: for as he that sanctifieth and justifieth is one, so do these go together; and when the soul hath the greatest sense of justification upon it, through the virtue of the blood of Jesus by the living faith, then is it most in love with holiness, and at the greatest distance from sin and evil; and whenever there is a failing in

in sanctification, there is also some eclipse of justification in the eye of the soul, until faith hath recovered its strength again, which it lost by sin's prevailing. For as the farthest and clearest sight is in the brightest day, so is it with the soul, when it is most in the brightness and beauty of holiness, its justification appears most glorious, and its union and communion most sweet and lasting; and so, like two twins, as they are much of an age, so they are like one to the other; and "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

We also by this light believe, That acceptance with the Father, is only in Christ; and by his righteousness made ours, or imputed unto us; not by the creaturely skill, but by the applicatory act of God's gift of grace, whereby the soul feels the difference between self-applying by its own faith, and God applying by his Spirit, and so making Christ unto the soul, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption: so that we believe, and are sure, that there is a great difference between imputation, as it is the act of man's spirit, and as it is the act of free grace, without man's forcing. And so we distinguish between imagination and imputation, between reckoning or imputing that is real, and reckoning or imputation that is not real, but a fiction and imagination in the creaturely will and power: and because we are against the latter, we are clamoured upon, as if we denied the imputation of Christ's righteousness, when it is only unto those that are not made righteous by it, to walk as he also walked: for, as the scripture saith, It is not he that saith he is righteous by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, but "He that doth righteousness, is righteous, as Christ is righteous," 1 John iii. 7. he that believes other-

wise is deceived. And yet it is not acts of righteousness, as done by us, nor as inherent in us, as acts, by which we are accepted of God, and justified before him; but by Christ, the author and worker of those acts in us and for us, whereby we know that we are in him, and he in us, and we hold him as our head; into whom all things are gathered together in one, even in him.

We further believe, That God is only to be worshipped, and not any likeness that man makes unto himself of God, from any view, sight or knowledge that he hath had of him, but in every act and service, man is to know what substantially, as well as whom speculatively or notionally, he worshippeth; as it is written, John iv. 22. "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship; for salvation is of the Jews." And he that thus worships the Father, honours the Son by the same spirit, which is one with the Father and the Son; in which spirit only God is worshipped, according to the form of its own choosing, and manifesting of itself in and by, according unto the good pleasure of the Father, who is a Spirit, and limits man unto the Spirit's form, but allows not man to limit the Spirit unto his form: though it be not of his inventing originally, but of the Father; yet man must no more limit God unto it, than he could command God to appear in it at first: for as he chose it himself, so hath he reserved liberty to leave it at his pleasure; who works all things after the counsel of his own will, which he hath purposed in himself; that the gift of the knowledge of the mystery of his will, might for ever be acknowledged to be of his grace, and from the riches of the glory thereof, according to Eph. i. and man be bound, but God free; man bound to wait in
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the light for God's movings; but God free to move in whom, to what, and when he pleaseth: then man is to go, when he saith, Go; and come, when he saith, Come; and such servants do serve him; and then there is no more curse, as in the days of will-worship and voluntary humility, "but the throne of God, and of the Lamb," Col. ii. 18. 23. Rev. xxii. 3, 4. and "they shall see his face, and his name shall be on their foreheads."

We believe also, That this worship is spiritual, and not carnal, in all its parts and ordinances; and not to be imposed by any outward force, but performed by the inward leadings of God's Spirit; according as the holy men of God were led and guided in the days past, who gave forth the scriptures; all impositions of worship outward, being only enjoined under the first covenant, that made nothing perfect, until the time of reformation, spoken of, Heb. ix. 10. But Christ being come, there is an end as well of such impositions, as of the meats and drinks, and divers baptisms, and carnal ordinances; they being all but temporary, and in order unto an end; but all to vail to Christ, the sum and substance of all, (the first) pointed at by all, and (the last) ending of all, the Amen. And he that thus worships God in Christ, his ordinances are spiritual, not carnal, and his faith carries him beyond his works, with righteous Abel; and preserves him, that he is not drowned in the form, like Cain; neither falls he short of the glory of God, nor of his assurance of acceptance with him.

We believe there is one baptism necessary unto salvation, Eph. iv. 5. "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." And this baptism is spiritual, of which John's water was but a figure, John i. 31. "That he should be made manifest to Israel,

“ therefore am I come baptizing with water,” saith John : and 1 Pet. iii. 21. “ The figure like where-
 “ unto, even baptism, doth also now save us, not the
 “ putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the
 “ answer of a good conscience towards God, by
 “ the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” This one spi-
 ritual baptism into the name of Jesus Christ, is that
 which saves ; the water being but a figure, that
 Christ might be manifest to Israel, who had divers
 baptisms imposed on them, until the time of re-
 formation ; but Christ, the substance, being come,
 the shadows flee away. And yet wherever any be-
 lieve they are commanded now by the same Spirit
 that commanded the believers to be baptized in the
 days past, either for the furtherance of the gospel,
 or trial of their faith, we judge them not : but this
 obedience is very rare to be found ; and we could
 heartily desire, that all would consider seriously,
 whether literal sayings, observed only by outward
 reading, hearing by the ear, or inward impulses
 upon the heart by the Divine Power, are the mo-
 tives unto obedience in this kind. And if honesty
 and uprightness of heart may be heard, we believe
 and know, the many dead souls every where, not-
 withstanding their baptisms, will be as so many
 witnesses against them, by their groveling upon
 the earth, as so many slain and killed men by the
 letter ; while the Spirit’s quickenings have not
 been known in the true baptism into death. For
 we find by daily experience, that most men and
 women live like Pharaoh’s lean kine, only to eat
 up the fat, and to envy those that are not so lean-
 souled as themselves.

We believe also, That as there is one true
 saving baptism, so there is one bread or body
 of Christ, which all the saints do feed upon ;
 and

and though they may be many, as to persons, yet their bread is but one, and they all in it but one bread. And this we believe is the "flesh that came down from heaven," John vi 33. Though the outward Jews now, as then, murmur at him, because he said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven," verse 41, 42. But Christ, verse 45, to stop their murmuring, tells them, that the knowledge of this mystery was only revealed unto them whom God, and not man, teacherh; and no more than are taught of God, can set seal and subscribe unto this truth in Jesus: though we believe also, that Jesus did take outward bread, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, as the scripture saith; and this was a figure of his body, that was to be pierced and broken upon the tree, and a shew, to shew forth his death until he came. And we believe he did arise again, and appear unto his disciples: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common," &c. "And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all people," Acts ii. 44, 45, 46, 47. And we believe that the apostle, in 1 Cor. xi. 20. saith true, where he saith, "When ye come together therefore in one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper." And all that he speaks in that chapter, is not to perpetuate that outward breaking of bread, otherwise than as the believers did, that were "Filled with the Holy Ghost in singleness of heart;" as before is said; and yet we judge not those who break outward bread, and drink outward wine, being in a belief they are commanded so to do, to put them in a remembrance thereby,
of

of the body and blood of Jesus Christ, by the Remembrancer, the Spirit of Truth, which is appointed by the Father, to lead into all truth. But to do it by imitation, or tradition only, as most do it, if not all, at this day, we know it is not an offering unto God in righteousness, neither do we believe this to be the communion of the body and blood of Christ; and yet, the eating of the flesh, and drinking of the blood of Christ, we believe man must know and witness, or he hath "no life in him," John vi. 53, 54, 55. And we believe that many are striving now in their spirits, as the Jews did, verse 52. saying, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" And not only the Jews, but many of his disciples said, "This is a hard saying, who can bear it?" verse 60. And at verse 63, he tells them, "It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life:" and he that hears and understands these words, that are spirit and life, will not be offended at what I have spoken of the flesh and blood of Christ.

By the same spirit and grace we believe, That prayer is an ordinance of God, when performed by his Spirit, in its words, and not those which man's wisdom teacheth, or without words, by sighs and groans which cannot be uttered; and these so often as the Spirit itself pleaseth: but the form without the Spirit, whether it be by words of other men's framing, or words of a man's own Spirit, according to his will, time, and manner; this is not the prayer that prevails with God. And we believe, there is none so weak and infirm, but this Spirit proffers its help at some time or other, though man regardeth it not; and the
more

more man's mind is gathered within, from all visibles, the more he comes to be sensible of the movings and stirrings of this Spirit, in its secret cries to God, answerable to the wants of that man or woman, in whom it moves and cries. And by the due watching thereunto, we believe and know, the spirit of prayer and of adoption, that cries unto God, comes to be discerned and distinguished from a man's own spirit and will.

We believe, by the same gift of grace, That there are several administrations, and several operations, according to 1 Cor. xii. and all "by the same Spirit;" as before the law, and after the law by Moses; and after by John the Baptist, and Christ and his apostles; and in all these the ministration had acceptance with God, through the management of the Spirit; and its rejection and dislike of God, for the want thereof. And by this Spirit were the scriptures given forth, and holy men of God did speak, prophecy, preach, and pray, as they were moved; and for want of it, the letter did, and doth kill. And for the further appearance and pouring out of this Spirit, answerable unto the work and service that God had for them to do, they were to wait, as Christ commanded his disciples to do at Jerusalem, to receive the promise of the Father: for, by this Spirit, he that speaks, speaks as the oracle of God. And therefore as it was the practice of the people of God in old time, to wait for the moving and stirring of this Spirit, that they might speak as it gave them utterance, in the evidence and demonstration thereof; so do this people, called Quakers, now; and according to its moving in their hearts they minister, according to the signification of the Spirit, whereby they understand both what and when to speak, and when

when to be silent ; as also, who they are that minister and speak in their own wills, above the cross of Christ, which the apostle was careful always to be in subjection to, lest he should make it void, by speaking the words which man's wisdom teacheth ; and therefore as the saints did, so we do believe, and therefore we speak : and such preaching and speaking in faith, as well as praying in faith, is acceptable unto God, as his worship, and not otherwise.

And we further believe, by the same Spirit, That the sum of all religion, according to truth, and the signification of the word (religion) is, Man not at liberty in his will, but bound again unto God, by his having given to him, by the light of Christ within, the true sight and knowledge of himself, as in himself, as lost and undone for ever ; and from this sight, a true sense to arise upon and remain with him ; from whence spring unutterable groans and cries unto God, under the weight of the burden and wretchedness, by reason of the body of sin and death ; and then when there was none to help or pity in this state, then is mercy shewed in Christ the arm of God, which is revealed as an help, neither seen, nor known, where, how, or when to come at it, or meet with it : and this begets in the heart of that man or woman, in and unto whom it is thus revealed, thanks and praises unto God, for this gift and revelation of his Son, in this needful time, whom the soul sees to be the gift of eternal love.

And we believe and know, upon this love and faithfulness of God, is founded, built and established, the everlasting covenant, whereby not only all men may be saved for its ability, but some shall be saved

saved because of its prevalency, which is not like
 to the covenant which he made with our fathers.
 And although all mankind is not saved, yet it is
 not because either of insufficiency in this covenant,
 or because of the weakness of the grace that ap-
 pears in and unto all men; but because of man's
 will, loving death, and choosing his own delusions,
 whereby his destruction is of himself, and God
 clear of his blood, in the free tender of his grace,
 gift, and striving of his spirit within him. For
 we know assuredly, according to the scriptures of
 truth, and experience of all souls that ever were
 truly converted to God, that though by grace
 man is saved, not of himself, but by the free gift;
 yet as the old world did, and those rebellious
 Jews, spoken of, Acts vii. who, as did their fa-
 thers, so did they, always resist the Holy Ghost;
 so do men now. And yet in the tender of this
 grace, and striving of his spirit, the Lord is a God
 so hiding himself in the management of this striv-
 ing, and ministration of his Spirit, as if it wholly
 depended upon man's choice and consenting, that
 man's will, as to him, is, as it were, free, in
 rejecting or accepting, life and death being set
 before him; whereby, in the wisdom of God, the
 propensity of his nature, as it came out of the
 hands of his Maker, hath an advantage, by this
 dealing of God, to put forth itself; so that man
 is as free in the choice, as he is in the refusal of
 the tender of mercy and help, and that with an
 equal indifferency, as it appears to him in this state;
 notwithstanding afterwards, in the further growth
 in this grace and knowledge of Christ, he sees
 clearly and convincingly, that the grace, that
 wrought hiddenly from his sight and knowledge,
 in the first working, tender, and ministration of
 God

God towards him, gained his consent through its own prevalency in the love of God; by which sight and sense, self comes to be abhorred, and the free love so admired, that he knows from first to last, all was of grace, and that free; that self is not able to challenge any thing, as due from what it had done; but all of gift; and yet, as before, with such an equal indifferency on man's account: so that God may and will appear to be just, both in condemning and saving, and the justifier freely of all that believe in Jesus, the light of the world.

Therefore let all take heed how they dislike this ministration of God, and striving of his Spirit in their hearts and consciences, under colour and pretence of its insufficiency; and therefore they will not come to him, because his drawings and strivings are not so strong as they would have them to be, looking for such an overpowering and irresistibleness, as they are not able to withstand and gainsay; lest such perish through a wilful neglect, and for want of stretching out their hand, when the Lord holds out his; and so they perish in the ditch, with a vain expectation of farther power, or cry in their mouths, Lord have mercy upon us: and so with the sluggard, while they cry, Yet a little more slumber, and folding of the hands to sleep, their garden is overgrown with weeds, and their backs clothed with rags, and they beg in harvest; whilst others, that have sown in tears, not fainting, do in due time reap in joy; and not despising the crumbs that fell from the table, nor the day of small things, witness the presence of their beloved, come down into his garden, and walking among the lilies.

Let these things be truly considered, pondered, and weighed in the true balance of light and
right-

righteousness, lest any soul perish through the false weight and measure; so shall my soul rejoice, that any have escaped the net of the fowler, through the discovery of the true light, and God have all the glory, unto whom alone it belongs; and man ashamed, confounded, his mouth stop- ped, and he laid in the dust for ever: and then shall my end be answered in writing these things.

JOHN CROOK.

AN

A N
EPISTLE TO FRIENDS,

F O R

Union and Edification of the Church of
God in Christ Jesus.

1 Cor. i. 10. *Now I beseech you Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no dissention among you; but that ye knit together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.*

Dear Friends and Brethren, &c.

I SALUTE you all in that first love wherewith God loved us, and we so dearly loved one another. In my old age I cannot forget those times and seasons of comfortable refreshments we have enjoyed together in the Holy Spirit of our heavenly Father: praised be his blessed name for ever.

That which is in my heart to you in this epistle, is, to remind you of that free love of God, that visited us in our low estate, when we were cast out, as it were, in the open field, void of all shelter, as in a weary land, quite tired, and weary of every thing: then was made known to us the hiding-place from the storms, &c. which we found to be as a rock in that weary, wayless, wilderness-state and condition.

My dear friends, you that know and can witness what I write, what remains, but that we love him
that

that first loved us, and one another in him. The former will appear by our keeping his commandments, and the latter by our diligent and tender watchfulness one over another, for our preservation in the same love unto the end.

Remembering that all miscarriages both towards God, and towards one another, arise and spring commonly from the decay of love: this procured that dreadful threatening to Ephesus, of having her golden candlestick removed, because she had left her first love, &c.

I doubt not but there are those yet left among us, that can remember that esteem and good persuasion that many people had of the truth, and of those that professed it at the beginning, because we loved one another; and therefore many concluded, we were the disciples of Christ. And it may be observed, that because Peter knew man's heart is not more ready to deceive him in any thing, than concerning true and unfeigned love, he prefers not his own knowledge of his heart, but appeals to Christ's knowledge of it, viz. 'Lord, thou knowest I love thee.'

And because true love to the brethren is such an excellent grace and virtue, the primitive Christians counted it a sign of their regeneration, saying, 'We know we are passed from death to life, because we love the brethren:' but seeing there is an hypocritical fawning, that looks like love, the apostle sharply reproves that, in saying, 'Let your love be without dissimulation.'

Therefore as God's free love in Christ Jesus was the cause of our gathering to be a people at the beginning, who were not a people, but gathered us, as it were, out of all sorts of professions of religion, to be a people to his praise; and did, according

according to his promise, Jer. iii. 15, 16. raise up pastors, according to his own heart, that fed us with divine wisdom and understanding; which was in some measure the fulfilling of that prophecy. So that we pursued after the substance, which is Christ Jesus; and left the shadows, ceremonies, and figures, as ending in him the substance; of which figures, the ark of the covenant under the old law, was chief; as Jeremiah, prophetically speaking of the gospel-times, saying, 'In those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more the ark of the covenant of the Lord, neither shall it come upon the heart,' as the margin hath it, 'neither shall they go after it,' &c.

Now, dear friends, seeing we began in the substance, which was the appearance of Christ Jesus in spirit and power, let all watch, and be careful, that they turn not aside, lest by hearkening to the fleshly wisdom, and carnal reasonings, any of you fall back again into the naturals, where the shadows pass for substances;—and so become bewildered again, and at a greater loss than you were in before: for then it may be said, It had been better for you that you had never known the way of truth; viz. (better) not only because it will be harder to return again, than before your first conviction; but also the fiery furnace, through which such must pass, will be hotter; because the state the backslider is fallen into, is aggravated by his being once enlightened; which renders that condition near unto impossibility of returning according to Heb. vi. 5, 6.

This I speak as a warning to all concerned, that they which stand, or think they stand, may take heed lest they fall; for, 'Blessed is the man that feareth always;' because he that casteth away true fear, will

will restrain prayer; and the restraining prayer, will discover the irreligious and careless: and the hypocrite doth not truly discern prayer, though he makes long prayers.

Therefore, dear friends, as you would persevere unto the end, in your spiritual union with God, and communion one with another; and as you would have such as should be saved added to the church, and that the number of them may be increased through the world, until the kingdoms thereof, become the kingdoms of the Lord, and his Christ's; which must be accomplished, and the mystery of God finished, Rev. x. 7. compared with 11, 15.

I say, as you desire the accomplishment of all these things, in their season, what manner of people ought you to be in all godliness of conversation? which brancheth out itself into all particulars of religion, and the duties thereof, as children to parents, subjects to their governors, wives to husbands, servants to masters, and the younger to the elder, &c. as the apostle writes to Titus: which exhortation would be to no purpose, did not the grace of God appear to them all; therefore he saith, "For the grace of God appears to all," &c. whereby the apostle exalts the sovereignty of grace, for the performance of all these duties; exhorting them to keep the "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace:" for peace must be kept in all the states and conditions, God hath placed people in; peace and love being the bond that will preserve in the unity, both with God, and one with another.

The children of God are bound together, as it were, in the bundle of life; and as they continue so bound, the gates of hell can never prevail against them: but if any separate from that bundle of life, and unity in the spirit, they are soon broke.

Therefore I exhort all, to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace; and then will you abide in the new covenant, that is ordered in all things, and sure; as the last words of David testify, in 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

For, although the great covenant is between the Father and his Son Christ Jesus; yet that covenant is derived from the Father to all his children in Christ Jesus: so that every particular, according to their measure, can say, with holy David, "Thou hast made with me an everlasting covenant," &c. as they abide in the unity of the spirit, and bond of peace.

But if this unity of the spirit be departed from, by disorderly walking, and running greedily after this present world, hasting to be rich, &c. such oftentimes miscarry, not only to the loss of their own estates, and ruin of their families; but also to the wrong of their neighbours; and above all to the dishonour of their holy profession, and causing the way of truth to be evil spoken of, &c.

Let not such deceive themselves, by thinking such miscarriages may be salved over, or covered with an outward and formal profession of the truth; for God is not so tied to any profession, that they should be at liberty to walk after the lusts of the flesh, and to please themselves; but if we break covenant with him, he is not bound to keep covenant with us; but the breach is always first on man's part, as the prophet Zachary speaks, Zac. xi. 10. which was signified by the two staves, *Beauty* and *Bands*, saying, "And I took my staff, even *Beauty*, and cut it asunder, that I might break the covenant that I had made with all people;" and it was broken in that day; and the poor of the flock, that waited upon God, knew that it was the word of the Lord.

And

And when the unity of the Spirit is departed from, and the bond of peace broken, the other staff, *Bands*, which signified their outward form or discipline, could not keep them together; but God soon cut that asunder also, that he might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel; for the brotherhood between Judah and Israel of old did **not** stand in the outward form of the same profession only, as appears Isaiah lxvi. 3. where it is said, "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck;" even when these things were outwardly required: but they were departed from the holy Spirit of God; therefore it follows, "But to this man will I look, saith the Lord, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Dear friends, Let us be careful to keep to the laws of the house upon the top of the mount, which is, "Holiness round about," Ezek. xliii. 12. If holiness be round about, then God is there, according to his promise, and Christ is in the midst, be the number never so small; yet it may be called the house upon the top of the mount, because **THE LORD IS THERE**; then there is no room for formality, or carnal liberties, nor any thing else, that tends not to holiness and purity.

But whatever advanceth and promotes holiness round about, even in all our ways, words, and actions, that the doctrine according to godliness may be maintained, even that godliness that is in Christ Jesus, although we suffer persecution for it.

The name of this house, **THE LORD IS THERE**, will end all other names, as it is foretold, that the time shall come that the Lord shall be One and his name One in all the earth.

His name is his power, and presence of his Spirit and glory, and as we give up wholly to his dispose and ordering of us, then it will be with us inwardly in all our meetings, as it was outwardly at the dedication of the temple; which God took so kindly at the hands of Solomon, that he would not dwell in it himself, though it was so much famed in the world, but gave it up to the Lord, that "God so filled the house with his glory, that the priests could not enter in," as it is written in 2 Chron. vii. and not only so, but God provided such plenty of sacrifices, that there was scarce room to receive them.

And as we give up to the divine power of God, as Peter calls it, that will make us partakers of all things that pertain to life and godliness, and so fill our meetings with greater glory than at the beginning; when few words oftentimes did the work of the ministry, to God's praise and glory, and to the comfort and satisfaction of the souls of his people.

These pastors which God raised up at the beginning, according to his own heart, went out to God's work, as Abraham did out of his country and father's house, not knowing whither; so they not questioning God's assistance, or disposal of them in his service; and like Israel when they left Egypt, and set forth their three days journey, saying, "We know not wherewith we shall serve God until we come there."

So poor in spirit were they in that day, and so closely kept they retired unto the light and measure of the Spirit of Christ within, that they durst not, out of an holy fear, open their mouths, till the word of the Lord came, *saying*, as the prophet Jeremiah speaks, and when that stopped *saying*, they had done *speaking* until it came again.

This

This was one great cause, wherefore the truth, at the beginning, so mightily grew and prospered, together with the holy conversations, answerable thereunto, of those that received the truth in the love of it, into the good and honest heart, as it is written, &c.

These things I write unto you by way of remembrance, to stir up your pure minds to follow these good examples, that those of latter times may beware of lusting to speak many words, and of thinking that may do the business of the ministry, and of lusting to preach or pray, to gratify an itching ear after speaking; or sometimes to shew their gifts and elocution for applause. This is not spoken to stop the motion of God's Spirit in any, nor to despise youth truly sanctified and gifted, but that none may be exalted when they see people affected with their ministry. Pray observe Christ's caution to those early messengers, that came and told him, that unclean spirits were subject to them, &c. by advising them not to rejoice in that, but rather that their names were written in heaven, Luke x. 20. This may be a caution to all those of lower attainments and less authority, who had need to take heed of popularity, or striving for a name on earth, but be sure their names are recorded in heaven.

Timothy was a young preacher, but rarely qualified, yet Paul in his epistle to him, amongst other counsel that he gives him, he advises him to exhort the younger women, as sisters, with all purity. Timothy was a young man, and probably attended with temptations of youth; therefore Paul adviseth him to shun youthful lusts; and instructs him to be careful in his exhortation to young women, that he do it with all purity, lest any sinister or by-

end should creep in to defile, and so frustrate his exhortation, &c. A good caution to all young men, that are but young preachers also.

Those pastors after God's own heart, at the beginning, kept much to the word of exhortation, to the light of Christ in the conscience, as a seed that was sown for the righteous to bring forth a plentiful crop of holiness to the Lord; from whence also sprang pure living praises to the Almighty, for bequeathing such a legacy and gift through Jesus Christ, unto such poor orphans as we were, at the day, when as to religion, we could call no man father on earth; nay, we scarcely durst call God father, in that state we were then in, at our first conviction. Yet I can say, with many more at that day, viz. in God the fatherless found mercy, through Jesus Christ.

Let all be careful, how any meddle by way of prophecy of times and seasons, so as to fix destructions and desolations to be on, or within, such a certain time, &c. But keep to the form of sound words, and gospel-doctrine, used in holy scripture, and examples of gospel-ministers, and not to be too positive about persons, places, and things; which if imaginary, presumptuous, or mistaken, proves to the great dishonour of truth, and stumbling of many, if not to the ministring an occasion of Atheism, to such as watch for opportunities thereunto, and also to cause many not to regard true prophets.

The first preachers among us, as all true preachers do, minded more the goodness and sincerity of those that came among us, than they did the number of the people: their business and message was, to gather the poor lost sheep of the house of Israel; and to call sinners not only to change their opinions,
but

but to change their hearts, lives, and conversations, that such might be added to the church, as should be saved; and in all things they shewed themselves workmen, that need not be ashamed; they were experienced in the word and doctrine, and knew that a bare convincement in the judgment and understanding, was not sufficient to make disciples of Christ; and that unhewn stones, as they came out of the quarry, were not fit to build God an house to dwell in; but would rather prove a disgrace to the workman that useth them, and a dishonour to the whole building, if made use of; for such unskilful builders indeed, may well be ashamed of their work, and give it over till they are better experienced.

Therefore such ought to be remembered, as have spoken unto us the word of God, whose faith follow; considering the end of their conversation, Christ Jesus, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, as Heb. xiii. 7, 8, 9. And that you be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing, that the heart be established with grace, and not with meats, as saith the apostle.

Therefore dear friends and brethren, Let us all abide with God, in the calling whereunto he hath called us; and none to strive for mastery, nor to be many masters, and to set up, as it were, for themselves, but all to serve the full time of silence, in order to be well experienced in the word and doctrine; and when you are thoroughly (of God taught) yourselves, you will understand, and learn of him, how to instruct others.

But let all, in the first place, learn well the doctrine of self-denial, submitting ourselves to God in Christ Jesus. So will every one know their

place and service in the house, or church, of the living God; where none that are really members of it, but will submit to the laws thereof, which are "are all holiness round about," and God in the midst, judging out all stubbornness, self-willedness, and all that wickedness of jealousies, evil-surmisings, whisperings, and backbitings, &c. which produce discord and divisions: and all as little children, and serving one another in love, and the younger receiving the counsel and advice of the elder, embracing it thankfully for God's glory, and their own benefit and comfort: so will all, from the highest to the lowest, submit one to the other in true love and godly simplicity, for edification and preservation of the whole. And then forgiving and forgetting all former distances; that in the unity of the Spirit you may be all knit together by the bond of peace; and the gates of hell shall never prevail against you, but you shall remain a people to God's glory, and your own comfort: and so you will abide in the pure religion, unspotted from the world; manifesting plainly, that you have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken, by all that noise and clamour that is made against you, &c.

Which kingdom, as it came not by outward observation, so it stands not in word or opinion, nor yet in meat and drink, but in righteousness and peace, and in joy in the Holy Ghost; and he "that is in these things," saith the apostle, Rom. xiv. 17, 18. "serveth Christ;" such a man or woman is accepted of God, and approved of men; having this evidence fixed to this pure religion, viz. of Father, Son, and Spirit, and all good men, as being that only pure and merciful religion before God and the Father, that the apostle James hath given,
as

as it were, a short definition or description of;
James i. 27.

So that whoever professeth this pure religion, and abides and continues in the same, bringing forth in his whole life and conversation the pure and holy fruits thereof, need not be ashamed of it; for to such an one, it is not only given to believe it, but also to suffer for the same; which hath been, and is a great confirmation to many, by that sweet power and presence of God, that hath assisted them in all their afflictions and exercises, both from within and without, and joyfully, in that needful time of great and sharp trials, borne up their Spirits to their great satisfaction and comfort, and to the eternal praise of God's most holy and blessed name for ever. Amen.

Hertford, the 26th of the
3d month, 1698.

JOHN CROOK.

A POST-

A P O S T S C R I P T.

Dear Friends,

LET not your outward concerns prevent your religious meetings and service on the week-days, lest the earthly spirit get up again, and bury you before your time; but meet in the faith that you shall meet with God, whether you hear words spoken outwardly or not; so by retiring into the inward and spiritual grace, you will avoid the extremes of dead formality, and false liberty, and witness that pure silence, wherein was felt the breast that inwardly nourished, and those paps that gave us suck, when we were young.

When Christ ascended, he commanded his disciples to wait for power from on high, the promise of the Holy Spirit, which, according to his promise, fell upon them when they were met together with one accord; and the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 2. exhorts them by their gathering together in Christ, &c. Seeming to use their meeting together, as an argument to keep down that wicked one, and them from that falling away he speaks of, &c.

Therefore, dear friends and brethren, be diligent in your meetings together, in God's fear and service, and that will procure his blessing upon your diligence in your particular callings; therefore I beseech you, stir up and exhort one another thereunto, by the elder giving good examples

amples to the younger sort, who are apt to content themselves with going to meetings on the first days only; and then, too many, instead of waiting and exercising faith, to meet with the teachings of the Spirit of God in their inward parts, only exercise their outward ears in hearing what may be spoken outwardly; which in tender love and good will to the souls of all, I desire may be prevented for the future.

Farewel.

JOHN CROOK.

AN

(A N)
EXHORTATION
TO
STAND FAST IN THE TRUTH,

ACCORDING TO OUR

ANCIENT TESTIMONY,

Which you have heard from the Beginning.

Dear Friends, Brethren, and Sisters,

I CANNOT forget those ancient days, in which we were refreshed together, when it was my lot to labour, both by exhortation and sufferings, amongst you: there being those yet alive, that may remember, with what success those days were attended; though many of our ancient friends are gone to their long homes; and others, as well as myself, are hastening apace after them.

That which I have to write to you, is by way of exhortation, to stand fast in the truth, according to our ancient testimony, which you have heard from the beginning: for I am sure we began well, who began in the Spirit, for the fruits of it were manifest, by our deep humiliation into the death of the selfish man; it being made of no reputation

tion by many at the beginning, after the example of Jesus, as also our mortification to this present world, and the friendship of it: so we were crucified unto it, and it unto us, at the beginning.

And above all, let us not forget those aboundings of unfeigned love one towards another, by which it was manifest, that we were passed from the death, where the whole world lies, in hating and being hated, unto the life of Jesus, that died for mankind, and rose again for their confirmation and justification: and where it is otherwise now, it is because of the enemy sowing his tares, while the good man slept; but he that continueth to the end, shall be saved.

We have been confirmed in the truth by many remarkable ways; as, our God supporting us under all our deep sufferings, and sometimes by his eminent hand upon those which caused us to suffer, as also by the heavenly testimonies of many faithful friends at their dying hours; but above all, by the testimony of the same spirit in our own hearts and souls, who are yet alive.

All which, with much more of like nature, that might be mentioned, may be as a cloud of witnesses to the truth of the testimony which we received at the beginning; and of the true grace of God, in which the faithful now stand, through Jesus Christ our Lord, the fulness and foundation, from whence all our refreshings, and springs of life and comfort proceed: which makes the sincere soul cry out, "Spring, oh well! and we will sing unto it;" and to honour the Son, as we honour the Father, who is, over all, God blessed for ever.

But, dear friends, there are goings out of the truth, as well as goings in; as into the house the prophet

prophet speaks of, Ezek. xliii. 11. And Rev. xi. 2. John speaks of the altar and temple, and them that worship therein, how all came under the heavenly measure given from above, into the hand of the angel. He also speaks in the same place of the outward court, adjoining to the temple, in which were such, as should tread under foot the holy city; being left unto their own measure, as it were, of opinion and imagination of their own conceivings; which all ought to watch against, lest, being left to ourselves, we be found, after all, but in the outward court, that is given to the Gentiles.

Let those that are spiritual, judge what I say, and they will confirm it by their own experience, that there is flesh, as well as spirit, in us all; as the apostle saith of himself, Gal. v. 17. Therefore there is great need of a strict watch to be kept "with all keeping," as the margin hath it, lest we forget there is going out of the truth, by many unsuspected ways, as well as goings in by Christ the Door, both being faithfully told us at the beginning; as many that remain at this day can testify.

These things I signify in short, that all may be diligent and careful to keep the word of God's patience, as those Philadelphians did, Rev. iii. 10, 12. who by overcoming, shall be as pillars in the temple of God, and shall go no more out.

But he that will build high, must lay the foundation deep: for this I have observed, the deeper the humiliation, the deeper the reformation. As it is said of Christ, Acts viii. "That in his humiliation his judgment was taken away; he was "as a lamb dumb before the shearers; he opened "not his mouth; and who can declare his gene-
"ration?"

“ration? for his life was taken from the earth: “who hath left us an example, that we should “follow his steps:” for he was both a Saviour, and an example, 1 Pet. ii 21. And what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

For the true and saving knowledge of Christ, is a conforming knowledge; “We shall be like “him,” 1 John iii. 2. “for we shall see him as “he is;” “and hereby” saith the same John, “we “know that we know him, if we keep his com- “mandments:” implying, that there is no true knowledge of God without holiness: and also, it is not the bare knowledge, for “hereby” saith he, “we know that we know him:” which experimental knowledge puts an end to all disputes about him.

And therefore without controversy, “Great is the “mystery of godliness!” and where that mystery is known truly, among such, there is no controversy about it; for both that mystery itself, and that faith, by which it is known and believed, are fitter for admiration, than man’s comprehension is, as the apostle speaks, 2 Theff. i. 10. “When God “shall be glorified in his saints, and admired in “all those that believe.”

Therefore all that forsake and leave spiritual Egypt, must learn to stand still, and be quiet, that they may see the salvation of God, and witness the joy of it, that they shall be of the number of those, who shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb.

Dear friends, in my afflicted old age, I have found that saying made good unto me, That they who go down into the deeps, see the wonders of the Lord; for there is witnessed that spirit which searches to the bottom of things, and manifests the deep things of God; which the fallen man, with all
his

his searchings, in his wisdom that is from below, cannot find out.

Therefore I beseech you, dear friends, watch unto the light and Spirit of Jesus, that you may be preserved, as born of the incorruptible seed and word of God: for all things else may be corrupted; but that which is born of God, is that elect which cannot be deceived: unto which light and spirit I commend you, in the simplicity of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, that you may be preserved unto the end. Amen.

Your friend in the truth,

Hertford, the 6th of the
12th month, 1698.

JOHN CROOK.

Anno Ætatis 81.

THE

THE POSTSCRIPT.

WE live in a captious age, therefore I thought good to explain our ancient testimony to the light and spirit of Christ within. I never understood, or believed, that the testimony was exclusive to Christ, being without us: or of the validity of his death and suffering without us, as the price by which we were bought, and reconciled to God: "For we were bought with a price," saith the scripture, 1 Cor. vi. 20. "For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son; much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life," Rom. v. 10. Who sits at God's right in heaven, and maketh intercession for us, Heb. vii. 25. And is also by his life, to wit, the life of Jesus, made manifest in our mortal flesh, as the scriptures testify, 2 Cor. iv. 10, 11. And what God hath joined together, none ought to put asunder.

This I take to be, in short, our ancient testimony, as to the God and man Christ Jesus; of which I hope we shall never be ashamed.

JOHN CROOK.

D d THE

THE DESIGN OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE name Christian, implies the anointing; Christ being "anointed above his fellows," Heb. i. 2. importing his fellows to be anointed also. And the beloved disciple John, 1 John ii. 27. saith, Those to whom he writ, had "received the anointing from the Holy One," &c. to make them holy (no doubt), their "heavenly Father being holy," Levit. xi. 44. Which is the great design of Christianity, as the scripture abundantly testifies; see Levit. xix. 2. and xx. 7. 1 Pet. i. 15.

Christ was also called Jesus, "For he shall save his people from their sins," Matt. i. 22. "By abolishing and destroying them" saith Leigh, on John i. 29. in his Crit. Sacra. And Christ saith himself, "For this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world," John xviii. 37. "To bear witness of the truth:" by drinking that bitter cup of sufferings, Mat. xxvi. 39, 42. for his sheep and followers, for whom he laid down his life, and shed his most precious blood, to restore man to the image of God again, that they might follow his steps, as he had left them an example, 1 Pet. ii. 21. Signifying thereby, that he was both a Saviour and a pattern; which being joined together, none ought to part, or put asunder, who "learned obedience by the things that he suffered," Heb. v. 8. "And made himself of no reputation," Phil. ii 7. All which was not only meritorious for all that should believe in him, but also exemplary to them,
that

that they should follow his steps, in all those afflictions and sufferings that should betide them in following him, in the regeneration, to fill up the sufferings of Christ that are behind, for his body's sake, which is the church, Col. i. 24.

Not that our sufferings, or following of him, did equalize his sufferings, or were the meritorious cause of salvation, and acceptance with God, either for ourselves, or others; but that we might be partakers of "God's holiness," Heb. xii. 10. the fulness whereof dwells in Christ; and that we might shew forth of the power and virtue of that which Christ did and suffered for us, by that grace we receive of his fulness, which is "grace for grace," John i. 16. viz. Something, as it were, of every thing that is in him, in whom we are accepted, even in his beloved Son, Ephes. i. 6.

Which might be figured by the prophet's raising the Shunamitish woman's child, 2 Kings iv. 34. who put his mouth to the child's mouth, and his eyes to the child's eyes, and his hands to the child's hands, &c. So we receive perfection of parts, though not of degrees, as to that fulness that dwelt in Christ.

Therefore, as holiness here, in order to our happiness hereafter, was a great end of Christ's sufferings, while on earth; so now he is in the heavens, at God's right hand, his intercession, and all that he doth, is in order to perfect his saints in holiness; waiting henceforth until his and their enemies be made his footstool, Heb. x. 12, 13, 14.

Whereby it appears, there were enemies yet to be subdued, which doubtless were those of a man's own house; as the prophet speaks of, viz. Those lusts and corruptions that still remained to be put under, in the minds and inward parts of his people. Mic. vii. 6. Matt. x. 21.

D d 2

Therefore

Therefore Christ preached to Nicodemus the necessity of regeneration, saying, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii. Yet Nicodemus made a good confession to Christ in words, saying, "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do those miracles that thou dost, except God be with him," a kind of short creed, as it were. Christ nevertheless tells him, a man must be born again, &c. "For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Though Nicodemus understood this birth carnally, yet he took it to be a real birth Christ spoke of; as appears by his question, "Can a man enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born again?"

Christ's words also signify, so much, and no less, as if he had said, "As that birth, which is born of the mother, is of the nature of the mother; so that birth which is born of the Spirit, is spiritual, and of the Divine Nature," 2 Pet. i. 2, 3.

Now, where this birth is witnessed, the design of Christianity is answered, by keeping the commandments of God, 1 Cor. vii. 19. and that is through walking by the rule of the new creature, which avails with God, as the apostle speaks, Gal. vi. 15, 16. Whereas a bare opinion, and formal performance of the things of God, avails nothing.

Wherefore from the want of this experimental knowledge of the new birth, proceeds formality, strife, and envy, about the things of God; for the new man, born of the Spirit of God, is renewed, in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Col. iii. 10. Observe, It is said to be renewed in knowledge, &c. It knows and understands divine things otherwise, and after another manner, than the fleshly birth doth: "For whoso-

" ever

“ ever is born of God, doth not commit sin, for
 “ his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, be-
 “ cause he is born of God,” 1 John i. 9, 10. “ And
 “ in this the children of God are manifest,” saith
 John.

So that the very end of regeneration is holiness
 and godliness; which is to advance the great de-
 sign of Christianity in the world, and thereby
 Christ’s kingdom is exalted, and himself magnified,
 who is the express image, or character, “ of his Fa-
 “ ther’s glory,” Heb. i. 3.

It is no wonder therefore that such as answer the
 design of Christianity, viz. By living god-like in
 Jesus Christ, suffer persecution.

In the next place, holiness of life and conversa-
 tion in Christ Jesus, is the end of the afflictions and
 exercises that befall God’s people, Isai. xxvii. 8, 9.
 as trials of their faith; for tribulation works pa-
 tience, and patience experience.

And the apostle James exhorts, to “ let patience
 “ have its perfect work, that they may be perfect
 “ and entire, wanting nothing,” James i. 3, 4. “ He
 “ stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east wind;
 “ by this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and
 “ this is all the fruit, To take away his sin. God
 “ will render to every man according to his deeds;
 “ to them who by patient continuance in well-do-
 “ ing, seek for glory, and honour, and immortality,
 “ eternal life: but unto them that are contentious,
 “ and do not obey the truth, but obey unright-
 “ eousness, indignation, and wrath,” Rom. ii. 6,
 7, 8. All which, with many like sayings and ex-
 hortations in scripture, shews, holiness and right-
 eousness to be the great design of Christianity.
 And the apostle, Rom. xi. saith, “ The kingdom
 “ of God is not meat and drink, but righteous-
 “ ness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost:”

Adding, "That he which in these things serveth
"Christ, is accepted of God, and approved of
"men:" as if this was the only true gospel-service,
and the great design of Christianity.

Observable to this purpose are these following
passages of Daniel Dike, a Protestant writer, in his
book, called *The Mystery of Self-deceiving*, p. 62
and 63. 'For,' saith he, 'circumcision, baptism,
'hearing, receiving, and all such like badges of
'outward profession, they are but as the outward
'garment of Christians, which may easily be put
'on by them that have none. And therefore,
'however these by many are thought sufficient to
'make good Christians, yet Solomon sticks not to
'make them the marks of fools, &c. as when he
'called God's own sacrifices, the sacrifices of fools,
'Eccles. v. &c. because of this foolish conceit,
'which many ground upon them,' &c.

He saith farther,—"For when the truth of
'obedience, and power of godliness is wanting,
'surely there is small difference between an Israelite
'and an Ishmaelite; a circumcised Hebrew, and
'an uncircumcised Philistine; a baptized English-
'man, and an unwashen Turk. Neither is the
'barren fig-tree in God's orchard in any better
'case, than is the bramble in the wilderness.'

He farther saith, 'But here our libertine, be-
'sides his outward formal church service, urgeth
'his faith in the merits of Christ: but' saith he,
'his faith is mere fancy.' Thus far Dike.

Now I appeal to all impartial and unprejudiced
Christians, whether amongst all the denominations
of professors of religion, they know any people, as
a people in general, that more fully answers the
end of Christianity, by holiness and righteousness in
their lives and conversations, than the people of
God called Quakers do: notwithstanding their be-
ing

ing misrepresented to the world by some, as if they were not Christians at all; because, say some, they baptize not with water, nor use bread and wine as the Lord's supper.

To which I answer, in short, for myself and brethren, we do not disuse them out of contempt, but upon a thorough search, and serious examination (which ought to be allowed us) we do not find those outward and visible signs to be required of God at our hands; which we hope none, that do, what they do, out of conscience to God, will condemn us for.

Now if the drift of the scriptures, the end of God's sending his Son Jesus Christ to bless people, not only by his dying for them, as aforesaid, but by "turning every one of them from their iniquity," Acts iii. 26. and the end of his life and sufferings in the world, his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, his intercession, together with his expectation of all his enemies to be made his footstool; and the end of God's afflicting and exercising his people, be all to advance holiness and righteousness in the world, as the great design of Christianity.

How miserably mistaken are those, that content themselves with the belief of certain creeds, which are many in the world, as history informs us, according to prevailing parties, &c. who commonly maintain (this persecuting principle) That an error in judgment, is worse than an error in practice.

Others contenting themselves with state religions, and with that Christianity they received at the font; little minding the necessity of holiness, "without which none can see, or know the Lord," Heb. xii. 14. And the beloved disciple testifies,

“ Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep
 “ his commandments,” 1 John ii. 3. As if he had
 said, There is no true and saving knowledge of
 God, without holiness : to which is annexed a pro-
 mise, viz. “ He that doth God’s will, shall know
 “ of his doctrine ;” which should rectify the mis-
 take of those that study to know doctrine, more
 than to practise holiness ; as also those who believe
 they cannot (though assisted by the grace and Spi-
 rit of God) perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord,
 notwithstanding the exhortations of scripture there-
 unto, which, they say, are to be understood only to
 stir up our endeavours, not to encourage our faith
 to believe perfection attainable, as aforesaid.

This belief of the necessity of imperfection, is
 not only dangerous, but hurtful ; for, instead of
 inciting endeavours after holiness, that it discour-
 ages all attempts thereunto. For what need a man
 set forth towards a city, while he believes he shall
 never come there.

Besides, This belief is grounded upon a great
 mistake, as if perfection in holiness lessened the
 conquest or merits of Christ, while, indeed, it con-
 firms them, by making his people more than con-
 querors through him. Which may be called more,
 because it is a double conquest : First, By himself,
 without them, as having spoiled principalities and
 powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumph-
 ing over them in it, Col. ii. 15. And secondly,
 Because he conquers all his people’s enemies with-
 in also ; that they being delivered out of the hands of
 all their enemies, “ might serve him (without fear)
 “ in holiness and righteousness before him all the
 “ days of their lives,” Luke i. 74.

So that perfecting holiness in the fear of the
 Lord, is so far from lessening or undervaluing the
 merits

merits or conquest of Christ, that it manifests him to be "able to save to the uttermost all that come "to God by him," Heb. vii. 25. Not only from the guilt, but from the filth of sin also; and to sanctify them throughout, both in body, soul, and spirit; and to make them whole every whit, as he did those he cured outwardly.

This way of holiness was the good old way; for it was called so in Jeremiah's time, chap. vi. 16. and such as walked in it, found rest for their souls: therefore it must needs be an old way, even that old way, in which Enoch walked with God, and "Abraham instructed his children," Gen. xviii. 19. "and walked in it himself," Gen. xxvi. 5.

And as it was the first way described, so it is the last mentioned in scripture, as appears Rev. xxii. 14. with a blessing annexed to it, viz. Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

But this is a narrow way, and to be sought for amongst the paths, as Jeremy speaks, chap. vi. 16. as if the reason, that it was no more beaten, was, because it was not a common road, but to be sought for amongst the paths; as if it was a kind of Shibboleth that few could hit of, that walked in those many ways: yet, notwithstanding, it was amongst the paths, &c.

A mystery like that which Solomon wondered at, and said, "This wisdom seemed great unto him," Ecclef. ix. 13, 15. that was concerning the poor man delivering the besieged city; concluding that by which he did it, was better than strength, and better than weapons of war: notwithstanding the poor wise man was despised then as the poor in spirit are now whom Christ calls blessed, and begins

gins his sermon upon the mount withal; as if all other blessings depended upon poverty of spirit.

I shall conclude this discourse with the preacher at the end of Ecclesiastes, saying, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man:" or as Doctor Gell reads it, *All the man*, in his Essay, p. 392. 'And,' saith the Doctor, 'Whatever else in man, contrary unto this, is either the beast or the devil.'

To this may be added also the saying of Richard Baxter (in his sheet to the Light) 'The question at the great day,' saith he, 'will not be, How righteous Christ was? But, How righteous we were?' Thus Baxter. And saith the preacher, 'God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil:' with these words the preacher ends his Ecclesiastes, after he had seen all to be "vanity, and vexation of spirit, under the sun."

Hertford, the 17th of the
12th month, 1698-9.

JOHN CROOK,

Near entering into the 82d
year of my age.

AN

A N

EPISTLE TO FRIENDS,

Belonging to HERTFORD Meeting.

Dear Friends,

BEING the Lord's prisoner (but I have a merciful keeper, blessed be his holy name for ever) I was moved to signify my remembrance of you as followeth: I beseech you be mindful of your reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, walking in all well-pleasing before him, that you may be kept unrebukable in his love, for our God is a jealous God, lest a divided heart cause you to err, in giving his glory to another: but if we love him with all our heart, and with all our soul, we shall, in our reconciliation to him, be reconciled to all states and conditions that we meet withal in this present evil world; "for fury is not in me," saith the Lord, but against the briars and thorns that muster up themselves in battle against him; it is our corrupt and fleshly part that God fights against, that we might walk with him as Enoch did, that was not, for God took him; he took him out of flesh into spirit as he doth all those that walk with God in the light, as he is in the light; he translates them (in spirit) into the kingdom of his dear Son, as Enoch was (outwardly) in heaven.

Dear friends, let us not always be dwarfs in Christianity, as it were, for Christ is a thorough Redeemer to all that the first Adam lost; as Abraham recovered all for the king of Sodom, that Chedorlaomer had carried away. Therefore mind
your

your growth, I beseech you, from little children to young men, that you may overcome the wicked one ; and unto the state of fathers (which for your time divers of you might be) that you may know him that was from the beginning, that is, Christ Jesus, yesterday and to-day, the same for ever : if you are in the spirit, walk in the spirit, that discovers the deep things of God, that we may, after our long wading, at last learn to swim in those waters, where all things live, as Ezekiel speaks, &c.

For the barren fig-tree in God's orchard is in no better case than the bramble in the wilderness ; profession without God's likeness in Christ Jesus, will receive no better answer from God, the judge of all, than, " I know you not," if we be found workers of iniquity.

You have had plenty of words outwardly, but to hearken to the word inwardly, is better than all ; for that is both able to comfort at present, and save for ever.

Dear friends, the visiting hand of God is in this town, and none of you know how soon mortality may enter into your dwellings, therefore I beseech you live as you would die, and then death will not be terrible unto you ; but as a messenger of gladtidings to your inward man, though displeasing to the outward.

I rest your friend and brother in the faith and patience of Jesus,

Hertford, the 25th of the
12th month, 1698-9.

JOHN CROOK.

ADVICE

A D V I C E

TO MY

CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

Dear Children,

I MUST leave you in a wicked age, but commend you to the measure of the grace of God in your inward parts, which you have received by Jesus Christ; and as you love it, and mind the teachings of it, you will find it a counsellor to instruct you in the way everlasting, and preserve out of the ways of the ungodly.

I have seen much in my days, and I always observed, that the fear of the Lord God proved the best portion, and those that walked in it, were the only happy people, both in this life (while they continued faithful) and when they come to die, though they meet with many hardships in their passage. By experience I can speak it, that the ways of holiness afford more true comfort and peace to the upright soul, than the greatest pleasures this world can afford; the former reaches the heart and soul, while the delights of this world are but a shew, and appearance only, vanishing like a dream; and whoever believes otherwise of them, will certainly find them to be but lying vanities; therefore the apostle, Rom. vi. 21. might boldly put the question to the converted Romans, viz. 'What fruit had you then in those things whereof you are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.'

Therefore

Therefore, dear children, be in love with holiness; make it your companion, and those that walk in it; you may find buddings of it, from an holy seed in your hearts; as you mind the inner man, the light will manifest the stirrings of it after God, which I felt from my tender years; although I understood them not so plainly, till I heard the truth declared.

I advise you to keep a pure conscience, both towards God and man; for if that be defiled, hypocrisy and formality will deprive you of all comfortable feeling of God's presence; and then deadness and dryness will be your miserable portion.

Be careful how you spend your precious time, for an account must be given of every idle word, though but few regard it; but foolish jesting, and vain talking, are said to grieve the Spirit of God; read Eph. iv. 29, 30. But improve your time in prayer, and religious exercises, &c. and be diligent in your lawful callings, for "The desire of the slothful man killeth him," Prov. xxi. 25.

Be careful what company you frequent; for a man is commonly known by the company he keeps, as much as by any one outward thing; and of your behaviour in company; for I have found, that a wise and sober deportment, adds much to a man's reputation and credit in the world.

Watch to the light, and its discoveries of good and evil, that you may not be ignorant of Satan's devices; so the net will be spread in vain in the sight of the bird; for watchfulness will make you in love with a retired estate; and the more truly and perfectly any man knows and understands himself, the better discerning will such have of other men; as in the beginning, when deep silence of all flesh was more in use, the spirit of discerning was more common, and quicker, than since it hath been neglected;

neglected; therefore be sure you spend some time, at convenient seasons, in waiting upon God in silence, though it be displeasing to flesh; for I have had more comfort, and confirmation in the truth, in my inward retiring in silence, than from all words I have heard from others, though I have often been refreshed by them also.

Love the holy scriptures, preferring them to all other books whatsoever; and be careful to read them with an holy awe upon your spirits, lest your imaginations put constructions upon them to your hurt; but exercise faith in the promise of Christ, who hath said, "My spirit shall take of mine, and shew them unto you."

Keep constantly to religious meetings amongst Friends; but look to your affections, that you respect not persons, but the power and life of truth, from whomsoever it comes; not minding the tickling of your affections, but the demonstration of the truth to your understandings and consciences; for that will abide, when flashes of affections will fade and come to nothing, after the words are ended.

Love one another truly, manifesting your love by good counsel, and being helpful to each other upon all occasions; being good examples to all you converse with, especially to your children, and those of your own families, that pride and vanity may not be countenanced by you, but rather reprov'd; remembering, while they are under your government, you must give an account of the discharge of your duty to God towards them.

Lastly, Be always mindful of your latter end, and live as you would die, not knowing how soon your days may be finished in this world: and while you do live in it, despise not the chastenings of the Lord, whatever they be, he is pleased to visit you withal. I have been afflicted from my youth up,
both

both inwardly and outwardly, but the God whom I served, provided for me, when all my outward relations forsook me, none of them giving me any portion to begin the world withal. This I speak, to let you know, I shall leave more outwardly, even to the least of you, than was left me by all my relations, &c. I need not mention this sharp affliction (beyond expression) in my old age, because, in some measure, you know it; but I could not have been without it, as the Lord hath shewed me, for I have seen his wonders in the deeps: therefore I say again, despise not afflictions, but embrace them as messengers of peace to your souls (though displeasing to the flesh.)

These things I commend unto you, out of true love to your souls, knowing how the vain mind of man little regards such advice as this I leave behind me: but by this advice I shew my true love to you all, desiring God's blessing upon it; to whom I commit you all, my dear children, and end my days.

Your loving father and grandfather,

Hertford, the 1st of the
1st month, 1698-9.

JOHN CROOK.

F I N I S.



